Central BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2025

https://archive.org/details/lordsupper0000revj

THE LORD'S SUPPER.

PRINTED BY MORRISON AND GIBB,

FOR

T. & T. CLARK, EDINBURGH.

LONDON, ... HAMILTON, ADAMS, AND CO.
DUBLIN, ... GEORGE HERBERT.
NEW YORK, ... SCRIBNER AND WELFORD.

THE LORD'S SUPPER:

A BIBLICAL EXPOSITION OF ITS ORIGIN, NATURE, AND USE.

BY

REV. J. P. LILLEY, M.A.,
ARBROATH;
SOMETIME HAMILTON SCHOLAR AND CUNNINGHAM FELLOW OF THE NEW COLLEGE, EDINBURGH.

EDINBURGH:
T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.
1891.

LIBRARY
CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY

EARTH offered Thee but meagre fare, O Lord,
When in the wilderness stones round Thee lay,
And the fell Tempter hurried Thee to stay
The pangs of hunger by Thy mighty word.
Thou would'st not have Thine energy restored
By aught Thyself as Son could do or say;
But held Thy crafty enemy at bay,
Until the Father's wisdom could afford
To send Thee angels' food. But now we reap
The fruit Thy famine won; for while we bless
Thy deathless love, Great Shepherd of the sheep,
The broken bread and circling cup express
The heavenly stores Thy printed hands still keep,
For all who round Thy board Thy name confess.

J. P. L.

L 729

PREFACE.

THE reader of the following pages needs hardly be forewarned that they do not profess to set forth anything specifically new. To give this, in explaining an ordinance that has been studied for well-nigh nineteen centuries, would be extremely difficult; and there is little reason to suppose that it would be at all welcome. All that can be expected is, that the old truths should be presented in a new order, in new connections, and, to some extent, in new aspects. There have been not a few indications in recent literature that something in this direction was really needed in connection with the Lord's Supper. An attempt has been made here to supply the want by presenting a new study of this Sacrament, in the light of the rites of the Old Covenant from which it sprang, and the original New Testament narratives that set forth its institution and use. The symbolic forms in which the different branches of the Church have summed up their interpretation of these records have also not been

46022

overlooked. The writer would thus fain hope that the exposition may be of service as an introduction to the study of the historical and dogmatic aspects of the subject as a whole. But his main object has been to exhibit the Biblical teaching on the Supper in its bearing on Evangelic doctrine and Christian life. What the Church of Christ needs to-day is to have the Lord's Supper operating in her experience, as, along with the Gospel, a present channel of spiritual power for life and service in the world. If every reader will only join in the earnest prayer that these pages may prove helpful towards setting this rich and attractive ordinance in this position, a blessing even greater than they deserve will not be withheld.

The principal authorities used for these chapters will be found indicated in footnotes at the proper places. Having had to revise the sheets in the midst of other pressing duties, the writer has much pleasure in acknowledging the valuable help in this work, given by his friend, Rev. James Nicoll, M.A., Friockheim.

J. P. L.

ANALYSIS OF CONTENTS.

—o—

INTRODUCTION.

PAGE

Christianity a Spiritual Religion — Yet accompanied by two External Rites, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, ... 19

The *origin* of the Supper naturally the first point for Inquiry—This seen in the Passover, and the Ritual at the Ratification of the First Covenant, ... 20

This followed by the discussion of its *Nature*—This found in the Teaching of Jesus and the latter Statements of Paul, . . . 21

Last of all, the *Use* of the Supper—The knowledge of this given partly in the Gospels, Acts, and Epistles, ... 21

The present Essay confined to the Biblical aspects of the Subject—These first Principles indispensable for a due appreciation of the Supper: 1. Christ the Saviour of men only through Death and Resurrection—2. Conscious oneness with Jesus the Pathway of Entrance into the Fulness of the Blessing of the Gospel—3. Entire Self-surrender to God the supreme condition of blessed life and successful Service, ... 27

CHAPTER I.

THE PASSOVER.

The Passover a Monumental Institution in Israel—Its Meaning quite plain to us still—Its first Object seen in the sparing of the First-Born of Israel, ... 35

Its simple Character as a Family Meal—Yet a real Feast and a permanent Institution of the People—Hence, also, a specifically Religious Ordinance, ... 38

PAGE

This seen in the details of the Ritual—The killing of the Lamb: the Family Meal: the Unleavened Bread: the Bitter Herbs—The whole manner in which the Meal was carried through, . . 44

The Accompaniments of the Passover also Religious—The Time of Celebration—The Period set apart for it, ... 45

The three main ends of the Paschal Feast: 1. The Commemoration of the Nation's birth into Liberty—Its separation from Pagan Feasts: 2. The Reception of Divine Blessing and Guidance—The later Introduction of Wine: 3. The Foreshadowing of the coming Redemption, ... 53

CHAPTER II.

THE LORD'S LAST PASSOVER.

The interest of Jesus in the Passover as a Member of the Church and the Anointed of the Lord—His desire to partake of the Feast at the close of His Ministry, ... 59

The Scene in Jerusalem at the Passover—The Preparation of Jesus and the Disciples—The Ritual at the Temple—The order of the Feast at Home, ... 66

The tender and solemn spirit in which Jesus partook of the Passover—His use of it before His Suffering—His desire for Fellowship with the Disciples, ... 68

CHAPTER III.

THE PASSOVER MERGED IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

The Feast held by Jesus a real Passover—The Breaking of Bread after the Supper—The Cup of Blessing—These two Features of the Ritual emphasised by new utterances connecting them with Himself and His sacrifice, ... 72

The Bread and Wine separated and constituted as the Elements of a distinct and permanent Ordinance—This soon afterwards recognised by the Disciples, ... 75

The Grounds on which this Change on the Passover was made—The Appropriateness of the Retention of the Bread and Wine alone, 76

PAGE

The fitness of the Time chosen for the Institution of the Supper—The main Purposes of the Supper: 1. The Commemoration of the Church's entrance into Victory over Sin; 2. The reception of Perennial Grace from a Living and Exalted Head; 3. The Anticipation of the Glory that is to be revealed—The superiority of the Supper to the Passover, ... 86

CHAPTER IV.

THE RATIFICATION OF THE FIRST COVENANT.

The Lord's Supper connected by Jesus with the New Covenant—This Language suggestive of a parallel with the Ritual used at the ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant, ... 90

The Formation of the Covenant at Sinai a natural Sequel to the Exodus from Egypt—The various Methods of instituting Leagues—The Form adopted by Moses—The way in which the Preliminaries were arranged, ... 95

The Offering of the Sacrifices—The striking Character of the Scene—The momentous Nature of the whole Transaction—The action of Moses in sprinkling the Blood on the Altar—The sprinkling of the Blood on the People, ... 100

Three noteworthy features of the Feast with which the Ratification was closed—The high Value of this event in the History of Redemption, ... 103

CHAPTER V.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE RECEPTION OF THE NEW COVENANT.

The Unfaithfulness of Israel to the First Covenant—Jeremiah's Prediction of "a New Covenant"—Its specific Characteristics as compared with that which Israel had broken, ... 112

This Promise fulfilled in the Messianic Era—The view of Jesus Himself on this point—The same opinion expressed by the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews, ... 116

The New Covenant the chief topic of the Gospel—The first Blessing it offers, the Forgiveness of Sins—This followed up by

PAGE

Fellowship with Christ in His holy Life—The provision made in the Cross for the Communication of this Victory, . . . 121

Faith the method of entering on the enjoyment of these Blessings—Yet the Word of God thus accepted not necessarily the only means of Grace — The value of the Supper as an accompaniment of the Word, ... 124

The special influence exercised by the Supper as revealing the purpose of Christ to save Men—Its Title to be called a Seal of the New Covenant —Yet not only a Seal, but a present Channel of Grace, ... 128

The question of the precise Relation of the Elements of the Supper to the Sacrifice of Christ — Preliminary Discussion of different Theories — Four leading Positions to be maintained —The superiority of the Supper to the Communion Festival at Sinai, ... 135

CHAPTER VI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

The Ordinance of the Supper necessarily a subject of deep interest to the Disciples—Their grateful Use of it—Their Allusions to it a fitting Topic here, ... 140

1. The supposed Celebration of the Supper by the risen Lord at Emmaus—Three Reasons for rejecting this View, . . . 143

2. The use of the Supper by the Disciples after Pentecost—The two Passages regarding this discussed—Four Reasons in favour of the Conclusion, ... 150

3. Paul's animadversion on the abuse of the Supper at Corinth —The influences that caused it—The way in which Paul deals with it, ... 158

4. The Celebration of the Supper at Troas, ... 159

5. The Allusions to the Supper in the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude—Three other supposed Allusions to the Supper shown to have a different Reference, ... 162

The main Lessons of this historic Survey: 1. The Lord's Supper a permanent Ordinance of the Christian Church; 2. The Supper to be retained in all the Fulness of its Meaning and Use; 3. The Supper to be retained in all its Simplicity, ... 167

CHAPTER VII.

THE REAL NATURE OF THE SUPPER.

PAGE

The Nature of the Supper a Topic requiring a closer scrutiny—The Discussion of erroneous Views helpful in bringing out new Aspects of Truth—Four main Questions to be answered, . . 172

1. *What does the Lord's Supper, by means of its Elements, set forth?*—Superficial view of English Free Churchmen—Contrasted with higher Views of older Congregationalists—Christ Himself really exhibited in the Supper, ... 175

2. *Under what Aspects does the Supper set forth Christ?* As the Crucified—The Death of Christ set forth, not in the ministerial actions with the Bread and Wine, but in the separation and collocation of these Elements—The Sacrifice of Christ, however, presented in the Supper in its spiritual fulness and power—Hence a reference in it also to the Saviour as Risen and Exalted, . . 183

3. *In what Respect, to what Extent, and with what Special Blessings does the exalted Christ now give Himself in the Supper?* He gives Himself in all His Grace and Glory—Yet special prominence given to certain Blessings: the Forgiveness of Sins—Dominion over Sin—Participation in the Holiness of Christ—Practical conformity to Christ—The hope of Glory, . . . 191

4. *What Relation do the Elements of the Supper hold to the Blessings of which it is the Channel?* The views of the First Disciples as determined by the words of Jesus—The Bread and Wine in themselves only the Symbols of these Blessings—Yet in the Supper put to a truly sacred use, and therefore to be so consecrated by the Word and Prayer, ... 195

The Origin of the Romish Theory of Transubstantiation—Four Grounds on which it is to be set aside—The Views of Archbishop Usher and the Savoy Declaration of Congregational Churches—The right view of the copula "is" in the words of Institution—This supported by the opinion of Turretine, ... 202

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF THE SUPPER.

The more general purposes of the Supper already stated—Certain more specific ends still to be noted, ... 206

PAGE

1. The Proclamation of Christ's Death—The real Meaning of the Apostle's language here—This a positive Duty, . . . 209

2. The Remembrance of Christ—Superficial views of Unitarian and Anglican Ministers—The Elements that enter into this Remembrance: Recollection, Imitation, and Recognition—Latent error in the names "Memorial" and "Commemorative Sacrifice," 215

3. Personal intercourse with Christ—The nature of Christ's presence—Three Biblical names of the Ordinance explained: "The Lord's Supper," "The Lord's Table," "The Cup of the Lord"—The real significance of the ecclesiastical term "Sacrament"—Hooker's view of the sacred mystery of the Supper, . 223

4. Personal surrender to the Lord—This duty foreshadowed in connection with the Passover and reproduced in the Supper—The reality of the engagement to be the Lord's made in it, . . . 226

5. Communion with fellow-Christians—The full significance of the term "Communion"—The Lord's Supper an incorporative Ordinance, ... 229

6. Thanksgiving—The participation of the Elements not in itself an act of Worship—Yet the Supper an occasion of Worship—The origin, range, and value of this Thanksgiving, . . . 233

CHAPTER IX.

THE CIRCLE FOR WHICH THE SUPPER WAS INTENDED—THE QUALIFICATIONS EXPECTED OF THOSE WHO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO IT.

The Supper designed by the Lord only for His true Disciples—This confirmed by the terms of the Apostolic Commission—The Injunction obeyed by all the Apostles—The real nature of Discipleship defined, ... 241

The chief Responsibility for entering into the Supper resting on individual souls themselves—The kind of Evidence by which men are warranted in becoming Communicants—Full assurance of Faith not required—Yet Earnestness in dealing with doubts indispensable, ... 247

The question concerning the admission of Applicants for full Communion for the first time—The measure of responsibility which rests on the Office-Bearers of the Church in connection with this matter—Erroneous opinions on this topic discussed, . 251

PAGE

No countenance given to a supposed right to inquire into the inward reality of a Christian profession—Yet a certain scrutiny to be exercised—The real question that lies before the Office-Bearers of a Congregation, ... 253

The features which the Church is entitled to require in Applicants: — 1. A consistent outward life; 2. An adequate knowledge of the Gospel; 3. An adequate knowledge of the nature and purposes of the Supper; 4. An explicit acknowledgment of a personal acceptance of the Saviour; 5. A promise of future obedience and allegiance to the Lord, ... 260

CHAPTER X.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE SUPPER IS TO BE USED.

Participation in the Supper expected of all Disciples — The entire accessibility of the Supper, however, no ground for dispensing with special preparation, ... 264

The chief dispositions to be cultivated by intending Communicants: Humility, Gladness, Love, ... 268

The desires to which these give strength: Felt need of conformity to Christ—A Yearning for closer Fellowship with Him—A longing for Preparation against the Future, ... 272

The special means of quickening these graces and desires in the soul: Trustful Prayer to God—Meditation on the Divine Word—Right guidance of the heart, or Self-probation—This illustrated in Paul's Exhortation to the Corinthians, ... 277

The Apostle's counsel needed still—The Meaning to be attached to "Discerning the Body"—The Views of Stanley and Edwards discussed—The True View—This confirmed by the Harmony with what is said on Self-Probation—The nature of this exercise—The right attitude in the midst of the Supper, ... 285

CHAPTER XI.

THE SPIRIT TO BE MAINTAINED AFTER COMMUNION.

Reflection after Communion natural and necessary—The kind of blessing which the Supper itself leads Communicants to expect, . 292

PAGE

Three different forms of Sacramental experience: Reception of Blessing leading to Thanksgiving and Praise—Failure to obtain Blessing, leading to renewed Self-Examination—Disappointment of expectations in Communion, leading to patient waiting on the Lord, ... 301

The spirit in which Communicants should face their future life: Culture of the Heart—Spirituality in daily life and service, . 305

The promotion of Christian Home Life—Happy Relations to the Brethren—Successful Service in the world—The growing power of the Supper in spiritual life, ... 310

Appendix, ... 311

Index of Texts, ... 329

INTRODUCTION.

It is the very glory of the Christian economy that its symbolic forms are so slight and inelaborate; for this very fact indicates that they are prepared for minds to which their use lies only in their suggestiveness — minds already imbued with spiritual principles and laws of which the simplest outer forms serve as illustrations and remembrances equally with the most imposing.

Caird.

INTRODUCTION.

THE most prominent feature of the Christian religion, as compared with that out of which it sprang, is rightly held to be its spirituality. As the blossom and fruit of a tree have less of earth in them than the root from which they are fed, so is Christianity manifestly of a more heavenly nature than Judaism. Unlike the Covenant which Israel received at Sinai, the New Covenant of which Jesus is the Mediator deals first of all with the heart and then with the outer life. The former, as has often been pointed out, was intended to operate on men from without inwards, the latter from within outwards. Hence while the theocracy set up at Sinai was marked throughout by a cumbrous organisation, a very complete system of precepts and an extremely detailed ritual, the religion of the Lord Jesus is essentially a dispensation of the Word and the Spirit.

But it is very obvious from the very first records of what Jesus began to do and teach that it was never His intention to institute a fellowship that should have no external form, nor be characterised by

any tangible ties. On the contrary, no sooner were the disciples fully attached to Him, than there gradually emerged in His teaching the simple but firm outlines of a constituted society, which, as it was directly fitted to draw the attention of men, was as clearly bent on winning the whole race to its side. The one condition of entrance into it was faith in Jesus, as the Christ and the Son of God. And those who submitted to this requisition were bound to confess Him by passing through a simple initiatory ceremony. But all those who thus trusted in Christ were necessarily united to one another. By faith in Him they had each one been born into the family of God, through the Holy Spirit, and were so made possessors of a new inward spiritual life. This life, lodged as it was in hearts not yet freed from sin, had to be nourished and developed alike in the individual and the society, by means of grace specially adapted to its essential nature. In the hands of the Spirit, the word contained in the ancient Hebrew Scriptures, and reproduced in the Gospel, was the main instrumentality appointed for that purpose. But in order to give Him a yet firmer hold of the interest and sympathies of His followers, Jesus, ere He went back to the Father, left them a second simple ceremony which was to be observed by them, as it was illustrated in His own action, to the end of the world. The first of these forms we know as Christian Baptism; the second, with which alone we

are to be concerned here, is, after the example of the apostles, designated the Lord's Supper.

In this view of the authority under which this ordinance was instituted, we are naturally led to think of its *origin.* There is in the mind of man a strong instinct, which prompts him to trace to its beginning every great fact or institution which bulks largely in his view. It is this desire which urges him to follow the channel of the broad river till he sees the main stream springing from its tiny lake or well-spring in the bosom of the hills. And we find the same impulse at work in the longing to find out the original form and subsequent history of any custom or ceremony which has exercised a powerful influence on our social or religious life. It must always, therefore, be an intensely interesting question to put concerning the Lord's Supper, How did it arise? Did it spring in its present form from the mind of the Founder of the Christian society without any previous suggestion? Or was there any already existing rite from which it arose, and of which it really presents only a richer modification? To these inquiries the New Testament enables us to give a full answer. When we read the narrative of the institution of the Supper, we are met at the outset by the fact that it was in the midst of the ancient feast of the Passover, and by the use of two of its elements, that it was set up; and when we look still more closely into the Lord's statements about it we find pointed reference to another

great occasion in the career of Israel, namely, the ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant and the ritual connected with it. To the careful study of these two rites, as they are detailed in the Book of Exodus, must every one turn who would understand the way in which the Lord's Supper came to assume its present form.

As we study the origin of the Supper, however, we cannot escape having the desire whetted to understand its *nature*. This so far appears, indeed, as soon as we discern the purpose of the older institution from which it sprang. As the Passover had for its main object to recall the deliverance from Egypt, so must the Lord's Supper be, to start with, an ordinance to commemorate the greater redemption achieved in the death of the Lord Jesus. And as the service at the acceptance of the First Covenant by Israel found its leading aim in confirming and securing to them by tangible signs all the blessings which Jehovah had promised them, so must it also be a foremost object in the Supper, which in our case takes the place of that service, to signify and seal all the blessings of that New Covenant of which Jesus is the exalted administrator. Yet as we examine the teaching of Jesus, and especially the later reflections of the Apostle Paul, we find at once that even these explanations come far short of an adequate estimate of the full sacramental meaning and worth of the ordinance. The Supper is there represented to be always, as at the first, administered by Jesus Himself. It must, therefore, stand in

close connection with Him as an ascended Saviour. And beset with difficulties—through our proneness to err—as the whole subject almost necessarily is, every careful student has laid upon him the duty of vindicating the character of the Supper as a channel of continuous, gracious, and vital influence from the living Lord.

This question, on the other hand, directly suggests an inquiry into the method of its reverent and proper *use*. The manner of observing the Passover was, consistently with the whole character of the dispensation it was associated with, prescribed in a large number of isolated precepts. It was not to be expected that in connection with a religion so instinct with spirituality and freedom as that of Jesus is, the same precision should be observed in indicating the way in which the Supper was to be used. Yet here too there is more than at once meets the eye. Not only are the leading features of the simple ritual to be observed in distributing the Supper distinctly indicated, but principles are laid down, and in the directions to the Church at Corinth directly illustrated, which enable us to state with certitude the circle for which the Lord's Supper was designed, with the main features of life and character to be expected in those who apply for entrance into it, the spirit in which it is to be prepared for and partaken of, and the special obligations which the participants are more and more cordially to embrace and fulfil.

It is to the elucidation of these chief topics, accord-

ingly, that the following chapters are devoted. Starting with a careful delineation of the purposes and observance of the first or Egyptian Passover (chap. i.), we are naturally led to emphasise the solemnity of the Lord's observance of the Paschal Feast before His death (chap. ii.) This in turn brings before us the precise way in which the Passover gave place to the Lord's Supper, and enables us to give at this stage some general description of the character and aim of the new ordinance (chap. iii.). This done, we turn back to the other ancient service reflected in the Supper, and study carefully the ritual at the ratification of the First Covenant (chap. iv.), a method which again affords the opportunity of showing how the inner spiritual glory of that grand observance has also been handed over to the Lord's Supper as the oft-recurring means of accepting the confirmation of the new covenant of the Gospel (chap. v.). The completion of this comparison readily leads us to look more narrowly into the way in which the Supper was used and observed by the Apostles of Christ (chap. vi.). And then we are set free to examine the real nature of the Supper by way of protecting it against current misinterpretations (chap. vii.), as well as pass in review the more special purposes it serves, as these are impressed on the various names it bears (chap. viii.). To these more doctrinal discussions succeeds the practical inquiry, which deals with the circle for which this ordinance was designed, with the qualifications

which the Church may reasonably expect of those who desire to enter on the enjoyment of it (chap. ix.), the spirit in which the whole occasion is to be prepared for (chap. x.), and the higher responsibilities it may be regarded as intended to suggest and impose (chap. xi.).

Into an exposition like this, it is obvious very much might be introduced of what has been elicited in the course of past investigation into the meaning of the Lord's Supper, and through the historic controversies of Christendom—and that not altogether without advantage. But it is no part of the design of the present essay to deal with these aspects of the subject. The aim throughout has been to educe and arrange the Biblical teaching on the subject, in order that the ordinance may take its place as a divinely appointed and authorised symbol alongside the written word, and wield the influence of a visible and illustrative element in the revelation of God concerning the grace that is to be found in Jesus Christ, His Son. This, it has long seemed to us, is the supreme standpoint for duly appreciating the signal value of the Supper. Treat it apart from the word of the truth of the Gospel, as a message which has to be proclaimed in the earth and lodged as an aggressive purifying force in the hearts of faithful men, and no wonder that the sacred feast degenerates into a feeble instrument for the magic manipulation of a priest, falsely so called. Set it in its true position as a palpable accompani-

ment of the word of salvation and a means of teaching at bottom the same truth, while it presents in reality the same blessing, and you will hold it as a channel of mercy to man, that linked as it is with the resources of invisible, infinite grace, will never run dry while the world lasts. For what a deep student of human nature has said of symbols generally will then of the Supper be felt to be specially true: "In a symbol there is concealment and yet revelation. Here, therefore, by silence and speech acting together comes a double significance. And if both the speech itself be high, and the silence fit and noble, how expressive will their union be?"[1]

In how many varied aspects the essential truths and duties of the Gospel are illustrated by the Lord's Supper, one can only see by studying the subject as a whole. But there are certain first principles of the Evangelic system of doctrine which are not only confirmed by the Supper, but are in themselves from the outset indispensable to anything like a full appreciation of its meaning. To three of these, in closing these introductory observations, we briefly advert.

In the first place, then, we think the inquirer should bring to the scriptural investigation of this ordinance a full acknowledgment of the fact that it was only through death and resurrection that Jesus Christ became the Saviour of men. This by many is but imperfectly confessed. Some there are, for

[1] Carlyle, *Sartor Resartus*, Book iii. chap. 3.

example, who hold that the Son of God is constituted our Redeemer, simply by His being born into the race; others think that he exercises His redemptive power only through His atoning death; others again, ignoring the propitiatory character of the death, make this saving ministry hinge only on the resurrection. From none of these points of view will the Lord's Supper be fully understood; not from the first alone, because the symbols of the Supper are two separate elements—bread and wine, and not one; not from the second alone, because He of whom the Supper testifies still lives to dispense it; not from the third alone, because, apart from His atoning death, Jesus could never have been fully identified with sinners exposed to the curse, and so could not come within the reach of appropriation as one who could take away guilt and restore righteousness. But when we believe that Jesus who was born of the seed of David, according to the flesh, and declared to be the Son of God with power by the resurrection of the dead, died for sin that we might live, and lives for us even as He is in heaven, we are able to appreciate every element of the Supper. For then we understand how that salvation was attained, with the glory of which it is so richly laden.

A second principle which we also need to carry with us to the study of the Supper is, that only when believers in Christ realise their entire oneness with Him as the ascended and glorified Son of God, can they enter into the fulness of the blessing provided

for them. This also is an element of the Gospel, of which there exists a too feeble and partial apprehension on the part of many disciples. It is open to question, indeed, whether the Church has as yet had the faith or courage to express the full teaching of the New Testament on this point. Certain it is at least that this is an aspect of truth which Jesus and His apostles never fail to press on our attention. "Go unto my brethren," said the Lord to Mary Magdalene, "and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father, and your Father, and my God, and your God."[1] Here Jesus makes His disciples one with Himself in His heirship of God, in His sonship with God and in His brotherhood with all God's children. And the Apostle John only reflects the same idea when he insists that, "as He is, so are we in this world."[2] To ignore this great principle in dealing with the Supper is simply not to see how Jesus can be the living bread that came down from heaven, of which if a man eat he shall never die but have eternal life. To feel the force of the self-communicating love of Christ here, a man must have the Spirit of Adoption in his heart, crying, "Abba, Father."

Last of all, no student of this ordinance should ever forget that they alone follow Christ under this blessing and vindicate their claim to the name of Christians, who follow Him in the entire surrender of His life and will to the will of the Father. Full

[1] John xx. 17. [2] 1 John iv. 17.

salvation carries in it identification with Jesus, not only in the grace with which He has been endowed, but also in the life He lived and, in a real sense, the very redeeming work he did. Jesus died and rose again in obedience to the commandment of the Father. This death and resurrection is to be accepted by us, not simply in the victory over sin and the entrance into life it brings, but also in the gracious obligations it implies. To those who, having grasped the foregoing principles, have learned this truth also of the Father, the Lord's Supper cannot but prove a most attractive subject of study; for it is then radiant with the light of a conscious hope of their being changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

CHAPTER I.

—o—

The Passover.

Chronologically as well as legally this is the fundamental constitution of Israel as a nation. The Sinaitic legislation, later in time, is more recent in nature, as being manifestly a superstructure on that Passover foundation. . . . The heart of the Passover, as here set forth, is sacrifice. *The thing* which the Passover means is, Supernatural Redemption from a common doom of death on account of sin, through the bleeding sacrifice of a lamb as prescribed by God.

J. MacGregor, D.D.

CHAPTER I.

THE PASSOVER.

ONE of the most difficult problems connected with the history of ancient empires is often found in the origin and purpose of the great monuments which time has still spared. In not a few cases the only clue that can be detected is wrapt up in the hieroglyphics inscribed on their walls, or in the remains of diverse sorts discovered at their base or within their enclosures. It is but recently, for example, that scientists have been able to come to anything like a united opinion concerning the origin and design of the Pyramids. Even yet there are many features connected with them on which no light has been cast. To all this, the history of Israel presents a sharp contrast. Of remains of an architectural kind, indeed, they have left little or nothing. Their chief monuments are to be found in their religious institutions. Here is the Passover testifying as distinctly to the relation of Israel to the God whom they worshipped as the Pyramids of the desert speak of the pristine grandeur of Egypt. But of this memorial we know all that the

Israelites themselves know. To get at its meaning we have but to turn to the chapter in their sacred history which tells of its institution, and there we find a complete account of its character inscribed on the great event of the deliverance from Egypt.[1]

The time at length arrived when the embassies respecting a peaceful departure of the tribes from the land of Egypt and from beneath the sway of the emperor must come to an end. Hitherto these had been carried out in connection with a manifest conflict betwixt the gods of Egypt and the divine King of Israel. Jehovah had shown, alike towards the Egyptian monarch and his people, the utmost long-suffering consistent with a victorious exhibition of His superior power. Yet all had been of no avail for persuading the king to let the bondsmen and their families go. A supreme judgment must be inflicted. Hitherto the plagues sent had left the personal and family existence of the Egyptians untouched. Now a blow must be delivered that shall strike deep into the keenest feeling of the tyrannical nation. This was to come in the slaying, by the invisible hand of God, of the first-born of man and beast in connection with every Egyptian household in the land. But to put the meaning of this judgment, as coming from the God of Israel, beyond doubt, the first-born of the families of Israel must be spared. And it was to achieve this and exhibit the contrast by means of an outward symbolism which would leave a lasting

[1] Ex. xii.

impression on the mind of the chosen people and furnish a starting-point for higher teaching that the rites of the Passover were framed and instituted.

In itself, the ordinance was of a very simple and intelligible character. Every household of Israel was commanded to kill in sacrifice a lamb, or kid of the goats, on the night of the departure from Egypt. The blood was to be caught and kept by the father of the family, acting as a priest, and thereafter sprinkled on the lintel or upper door-post and the two side-posts of their houses. This blood was to be their shield when the last judgment on the land of Egypt was being executed. When the Angel of the Lord "passed through" the land to smite all the Egyptian first-born, the sight of the blood-red marks on the houses or tents of Israel would constrain him to "pass over" or "overleap"[1] all the inmates, like the lightning that, sweeping over a vast forest, blasts many trees in its career whilst it leaves others unscathed. Hence it was that the whole rite of sacrifice was thus fulfilled, and in course of time the lamb itself so used came to be called "the Passover."

The first night of its observance was truly a night to be much observed to the Lord. Through the elders of the tribes, Moses is able to reach all the subordinate officials that had charge of smaller communities. These

[1] This is the literal meaning of the verb *pasaḥ*, from which the word for passover (*pesaḥ*) comes. The noun is first "stepping over," then "the exemption-sacrifice," then "the passover feast." *Vide* Fuerst. *Lexicon*, *s.v.*

in turn give directions to all the families in their districts. Thus it comes to pass that there is not a household of Israel in the land but avails itself of the appointed shelter. Thousands of lambs are slain throughout the towns, villages, and hamlets, occupied by the people. Not a door-post of a house, not a pole of a tent is there that does not bear the purple blot which bids the destroying angel pass by. Nor does a single foot cross the threshold till on the wings of the blast the wail of the Egyptians is borne over the country to tell the ransomed people that they may begin the march to the promised land. Then at length the word of command reaches the families of Israel. And with an order and a precision that finds no parallel in history, they move into the pathway of freedom through the door held open by Jehovah's own hand.

It is plain, however, that even on the night when it was first carried out, this action with the blood of the lamb was associated with other features which enlarged its character and scope beyond those of a device for securing easily discernible marks, or even of a simple sacrifice. For one thing it was associated with a household meal. After the lamb had been killed, its flesh was to be roasted whole with fire—not sodden, that is, seethed or boiled in water—and eaten entirely that same night. In partaking of the flesh of the lamb the families of Israel were permitted to eat unleavened bread—bread, that is, in the making of which water only, and no yeast or other ferment,

had been used; and therewith also some of the bitter herbs which they had been otherwise accustomed to eat as an ordinary condiment or relish. Moreover, the families of the people were to partake of the meal in the attitude of pilgrims starting on a long journey. Their loins were to be girded, the long, loose garments they commonly wore being lifted up and secured by a belt round the waist; their staves were to be already within their grasp; their sandals firmly strapped on their feet; and they were to be ready to march at the first word of command. If this had been an ordinary meal they would have been at liberty to take all the time commonly allotted to it. But it was "the Lord's passover." He alone was to fight for them and He alone must have the glory of their sudden departure. The children of Israel were to be, this last night in Egypt, only the Lord's guests, entertained by Him for a brief interval, ere they started on their victorious exodus; and the meal must be eaten in haste.

Nevertheless, as the words used in its appointment expressly say, the Passover was intended to be regarded by the tribes of Israel as a real feast. Hurried though the meal was, as enjoined by Jehovah, it was meant to be partaken of in a sacred, festal spirit. And well might this be so. For it was on this night that the tribes of Israel were on the point of beginning a truly national existence. Hitherto, under the curse of a dire bondage, they had been nothing more than scattered communities of down-trodden serfs, with

nothing but the barest rudiment of a government or constitution among them. The spirit of felt unity had never been awakened. But here on the eve of a final liberation they were about to be born into a new life. And just as it accords well with the family life to celebrate the birth of its children by some kind of special gathering, so it was held fitting to mark the birth of the nation of Israel by this new festal meal. The Passover was Israel's birthday feast, and had to be partaken of with feelings of mingled solemnity and gladness.

It is in entire harmony with this view that the Passover was spoken of from the outset as a permanent institution of the ransomed people: "Ye shall keep it a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance for ever."[1] Special care was to be taken that the children of each new generation should be taught the whole meaning of the feast, so that from century to century, through all the subsequent career of the people, the service might be kept up, and the memory of the wondrous interposition of Jehovah, in the dawn of their history, remain unclouded by the lapse of time.[2] This injunction was to a large extent obeyed. The Passover was continually observed in the journey through the wilderness under Moses. It could not have been neglected after the conquest of Canaan under Joshua.[3] And ever afterwards, save in those periods of the

[1] Ex. xii. 14. [2] Ex. xii. 25–27. [3] Josh. v. 10–15.

national neglect of all the ordinances of the Sinaitic Covenant when the people were ensnared by the idolatrous practices of surrounding heathen tribes, or in those later eras when the people were in exile, the ancient solemnity was always kept. The revival of its celebration indeed was the most prominent feature of every new attempt at a thorough national reformation, as in the days of Hezekiah, Josiah, Ezra, and Nehemiah.[1] And since at such times nothing was left undone to link the ordinance with the deepest sympathies of the nation, and to make its celebration as gladdening as it was impressive, the record of such revivals in the complete Canon of their sacred Scriptures became to subsequent centuries a monument of its signal value that could never be sufficiently contemplated.

This being so, it is not difficult to see how, in the long run, there was no institution of the Jewish Church which became so deeply interwoven with their most cherished traditions, or so deeply characteristic of their mind and spirit. It helped much to bring about this result that the annual celebration of this feast came to be conducted only in Jerusalem, and that up to the capital multitudes of the people went on pilgrimage every year for this purpose. By this means the Passover was certain to become a channel for the strong social and patriotic instincts of the people, and thus prove a means of cementing the scattered families

[1] 2 Chron. xxx. and xxxv.; Ezra vi. 21, 22.

of the nation into one great brotherhood. Not a few Biblical historians, however, have attached an exaggerated importance to this aspect of the national feast. And therefore it is imperative that it should be stated and explained with the utmost care that, distinctive feature of the national life as it was, the Passover was never only the medium of a mere historical commemoration. On the contrary, it was also and chiefly a specifically religious ordinance. The very fact of its having been enjoined by Jehovah Himself could not fail to impart much of this character to it. And seeing that, in addition to its appointment by Him, it was to be observed as a feast to the Lord,[1] we are justified in concluding that the whole form of the feast down to its minutest details was from the beginning so ordered as to give distinct expression to certain great religious ideas which the Lord intended to be in this way engrained on the mind and conscience of the people. Whether we look at the action with the blood, or the different items which made up the meal that followed, or the manner in which the meal was partaken of, or the accompaniments of the whole festival, we shall find that everything was ordained so as to suggest a distinct symbolic meaning, which it was possible for many of the people even then to catch and in some measure to understand.[2]

[1] Ex. xii. 14.

[2] Cf. the Bible dictionaries, especially *The Imperial Bible Dictionary*, Art. "Feasts."

How instructive, for example, was the first step preparatory to the festival, namely, the killing of the lamb. This was a truly religious solemnity, because it was a sacrifice. Some have been inclined to doubt this, because in certain points it does not chime in with the ritual of later days—as, for instance, in the slaying of the lamb at the door of each house and the sprinkling of the blood on the side-posts and lintel. But these circumstances, it may easily be seen, do not affect its essential character. The whole of this part of the service was expressly called at first the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover,[1] and later on the Lord Himself calls it "My sacrifice."[2] The arrangements for slaying the victim and sprinkling the blood were also manifestly ordered so as to suit the necessities of the crisis in Egypt. For after the Exodus, when the tabernacle had been set up and had become the centre of the people's worship, it was expressly enacted that the lamb of each household should always be slain at the holy place and its blood sprinkled on the one altar. What should chiefly lead us to this conclusion, however, is the value which the Lord Himself attaches to the sprinkled blood as protecting the lives of the first-born of Israel: "When I see the blood, I will pass over you."[3] Could the necessity for this shelter fail to remind the Israelites that they, too, had sinned against the Lord as well as the Egyptians, that there was indeed "no difference" between them, and that

[1] Ex. xii. 27. [2] Ex. xxiii. 18; chap. xxxiv. 25. [3] Ex. xii. 13.

were the Lord strict to mark iniquity they, too, deserved to have their first-born falling under this righteous judgment? If this were so, then all the deeper would be their appreciation of His saving grace. For now, in accordance with His ancient purpose of love, the Lord provides a sacrifice and a propitiation in the slain lamb; and when they appropriate this substitute by duly sprinkling the blood on their houses they are taught to see that by this trust their sins as a people are forgiven, and their position in God's favour secured.

Not less pregnant with religious teaching was the meal that followed on the back of the killing of the lamb. Since it was the flesh of the lamb whose blood had been used to expiate sin that was the chief element in the meal, this was a truly sacrificial feast. Like all other meals of a similar nature, it was enjoined as a means of showing forth and cherishing fellowship, not only with those who stood around the table, but with the Lord of all, who alone had provided it. In partaking of this repast, Israel, on the one hand, was reminded that they were themselves poor and needy, and unable to do anything that would please God; the Lord, on the other hand, in providing this meal, taught them that He alone could at once forgive their sins, and give due sustenance to their nature and life as a ransomed people. In receiving this blessing at the hand of God, however, the children of Israel were bound over to put away from heart and

conduct everything they knew to be opposed to the mind and will of God. This was the lesson of the unleavened bread. The people were invited to partake of bread with the roasted lamb, but, unlike the bread which they used in ordinary meals, it had to be made without any element that could cause fermentation. No doubt this was so far rendered necessary by the very circumstances of their sudden departure from Egypt. The Egyptians were to thrust the people out in one night, and thus they had to take their dough and bake it without its being leavened, their kneading-troughs being bound up in their clothes upon their shoulders.[1] The general lesson was in this way taught that men must not linger long in face of the manifest will of God, but make haste to keep His commandments. Yet the injunction, maintained as it was for all the future, had reference to a yet deeper truth. Leaven, whether in the shape of a liquid or of sour dough, is the principle of fermentation, and so the source of change in the direction of corruption or decomposition. The strict commandment to Israel, therefore, to eat only unleavened bread at the Paschal Meal, and afterwards to eat no other kind for seven days, was just a symbolic warning to every one to put away from heart and life every corrupt desire and every unrighteous way, and to cultivate and exhibit only what was instinct with sincerity and truth. And this had to be attended to with much watchfulness. The

[1] Ex. xii. 34.

special property of leaven is its power of penetrating and assimilating to its changeful character the mass of dough in which it is inserted. Nothing could more vividly represent to the people the real nature of sin. Iniquity is characterised by its power of self-propagation. To deny the people the use of leaven in the bread used for the Passover, and to urge them to search for the last traces of it in their houses, was a simple but effective way of drilling into them the thought that, if they were to keep up fellowship with God and enjoy His grace, they must watch against the very appearance of iniquity, and mingle holiness with heart and conduct continually. But, taken as a whole, this is a work that can never be carried through without much inward trial. For it demands the entire subjugation of the corrupt nature, which is found in the heart even of those who are brought out of the bondage of sin. This was the lesson of the bitter herbs which were to be eaten with the bread and the lamb. Fit emblem at first of the hard and bitter bondage the children of Israel had to undergo in Egypt, this element of the meal became a symbol of that inward discipline of mortifying the corrupt nature, and that godly sorrow for sin, without which no outward redemption can avail to bring the soul into felt union with God.

Quite as distinctly religious in its whole teaching, also, was the whole manner in which the meal was carried through. The injunction to keep the Passover was laid on all the families of Israel. Every house-

hold was under a special and solemn obligation to celebrate this festival to the Lord. This was necessarily felt at first chiefly by the father or male head of the family. Since the sacrifice was to be essentially a sacrifice for the family, and was intended to furnish a household meal, he had to take the part that was afterwards so far filled by the priesthood. It is to be noted, however, that even after the priesthood had been instituted the family still retained its priestly privilege of alone eating the sacrifice it had offered to the Lord. This was doubtless intended to teach the people that Jehovah was the God of all the families of Israel, and that every individual soul in them, as represented by the head of each household, was to live a life entirely consecrated to Him. This was still more pointedly enforced in the regulation so strictly maintained afterwards, that only circumcised members of the commonwealth, free from ceremonial defilement, were to partake of the sacred meal. But the main truth which Israel needed much to be taught at this time was the unity of the life which they were to receive from the Lord, and live out in fellowship with one another. And this lesson was set forth in the provisions that there was to be a single lamb for a house, or as many as might constitute a family; that it was to be roasted and not boiled, lest any portion of the nutritive sap should be lost, and roasted whole, so that no portion of a divine gift should be left unused; that its flesh was to be wholly consumed in one night,

so as to keep it separate from common food; and that not a bone of it was to be broken. By these enactments the instruction was given that Israel was to be one household of faith, of which the Lord was the heavenly Head, and which was to draw from Him at once the blessing of redemption and the one sacred sustenance that, as the redeemed of the Lord, they required.

Altogether in keeping with the whole method of the feast were what had been enjoined as accompaniments of it. It has just been said that, in partaking of the Passover, the members of every family in Israel were called on to surrender themselves wholly to the service of Jehovah. This was such an important lesson that it pleased the Lord to present it in a yet more specific and distinct fashion. In appointing the Paschal Feast the Lord so ordered the time of its celebration as to make it coincide with the ear month of the Jewish season—that is, the period when the grain sown in the fields began to present the full corn in the ear. Nothing lies so close to the life of a people as the fruits of the earth by which they live; and Israel was ordered to bring to the Lord, on the second day of the feast, the first ripe sheaves of the barley harvest, as a sacred offering to Him. This taught them that all their substance belonged to Jehovah, as truly as it came from Jehovah. Nay, more: since the first-fruits really represented the whole ingathering, this requisition would very fittingly remind them that the rescued first-born of Israel, and with

them the whole people, were also to be laid on the altar of the Lord's will and service. Lest this more personal aspect of the dedication should slip out of view, the offering of the sheaves had to be accompanied by a burnt-offering, expressive of the surrender of the worshipper's whole energies to the Lord of all. As the proper performance of these duties demanded time for consideration, relief from the pressure of ordinary work was provided in two whole days out of the seven being set apart as Sabbaths,[1] an enactment which carried in it the promise of rest for the soul in the will of God as well as repose for the wearied body. And as, even in the midst of sacred privileges and employments, men come short of the glory of God, the large addition made to the daily sacrifices of that period would alike remind the people to confess their shortcomings, and assure them that pardon would never be withheld.

To reach the full value of the Passover as an ordinance for Israel, however, it is not sufficient merely to study the religious significance of its details. Understanding that every part of the solemnity was arranged so as to be a bright picture — an acted parable — of precious spiritual truths, we must also inquire what main ends were served by it as a whole. Only in this way can we discern the wider bearing of the ordinance on the spiritual life of the people, and the progress of the redemptive purpose of God.

[1] Lev. xxiii. 7, 8.

1. Looking at the ordinance in this connection, then, we are reminded again, first of all, that one main intention of it was to enable the people to commemorate that great era in their history when they were rescued by the hand of the Lord from servitude in Egypt and had entered into an independent national existence. The very form of the feast in all its special features being preserved as it was instituted on the night of the Exodus, its continued observance could not fail to recall the great events by which it was accompanied. This retrospective reference of the feast could not fail to be yet further emphasised by two additional arrangements made by the Lord Himself. One of these, as indeed the very first words appointing the ordinance indicate, was that the whole religious year of the people should thenceforward be reckoned as beginning with the month in which they left Egypt. "And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, saying, This month shall be unto you the beginning of months: it shall be the first month of the year to you."[1] Hitherto the only calendar which Israel used had begun with the month Tishri (September–October); now, for all religious purposes at least, it was to begin with Nisan or Abib. In one respect, this arrangement also fell in very suitably with the course of the seasons. At this period, corresponding with the middle of our April, Nature begins to disclose her wealth of life and beauty. A new

[1] Ex. xii. 1, 2.

quickening energy manifests itself in all the outward world. "The winter is past, the rain is over and gone, the flowers appear on the earth, the time of the singing of birds is come." And the hearts of men instinctively beat in unison with the happy change. It was a bright coincidence that every year, when the very landscape was being arrayed in its vernal robes, the people themselves should feel called on to renew the gladness of their youth, and exult again in the memories of the deliverance which gave them the independence they still enjoyed.

An aspect of the solemnity so important as this, however, could not be left to the impulse of the people's gratitude. It had to be secured by a special direction bound up with the celebration of the Feast itself. And this was given in the injunction that every time the Passover was held by a household, the children should be led to inquire what the object of it was, and the head of the family should explain it as referring to the Lord's interposition on their behalf: "And it shall come to pass, when your children shall say unto you, What mean ye by this service? that ye shall say, It is the sacrifice of the Lord's passover, who passed over the houses of the children of Israel, when he smote the Egyptians, and delivered our houses." [1]

The supreme advantage of this last appointment was, that along with other features, it helped to keep the Passover true to its original purpose, and quite

[1] Ex. xii. 26, 27.

distinct from the association of other pagan feasts. For Israel was by no means alone in celebrating their first annual feast at this period of the year. The time of the vernal equinox seems to have been fastened on by several of the most ancient nations as the season which was best fitted to express their feelings in connection with the return of the fuller power of the sun and the regeneration of the natural world. So widespread, indeed, was this custom that it can hardly be accounted for, save on the supposition of some primeval tradition. In Babylonia, for example, there was always a feast in honour of Baal in the spring of the year, preceded by a fast of forty days. In Egypt itself also, there was a sacred fast in honour of Osiris, which also had a special reference to the rising of the Nile. The same fact is found in ancient Scandinavia, and North Africa, and even Mexico. But, though coincident with such pagan festivals as these in point of time, the spring feast of Israel was very different in origin and purpose. In other nations, such feasts degenerated into occasions and scenes of revelry and shame. But coming from the Lord, and laden with the memories of deliverance from dire bondage into liberty and joy, the Passover was observed as a holy ordinance, and an occasion for thanksgiving and praise.

2. Important as this first purpose of the Passover was, it must not be suffered to overshadow that other aspect of it, in virtue of which, as often as it was

celebrated, it was a source of continuous blessing from the Lord to His people. This value was attached to it in common with every other ordinance of their worship. The fact that a form of sacred service was carried out in connection with divinely-appointed symbols did not strip it of its reality as a channel for the religious life. And instinct with truth conveyed in outward observance as the paschal feast was, it was yet for all that used it aright a means of divine grace to the soul. That influence it could not but exert, simply as it was appointed by Jehovah, the heavenly King of the people. Every fresh celebration of the Passover was an act of national confidence in Him, and a proof of allegiance to His sway. And as One who was faithful to His covenant, He could not but reward their obedience with His continued favour.[1] Yet this was not all. Every single rite was designed to meet some new need of the people. And the Passover, with its symbolism so distinctly marked, must have been intended to bestow continually just those blessings which we have already found to be set forth in its details. Was the blood of the slain lamb, and the other offerings, sprinkled on the altar of the tabernacle or temple, as of old on the door-posts of the houses? Then this confirmed to them the promise of forgiveness. Did the families of the people partake of the roasted flesh of the offered lamb? Then had they still the promise and the blessing of continued

[1] Ex. xxxiv. 24.

maintenance for their spiritual as well as their providential life. Did every member of each family partake of one and the same food, at one and the same time, with the rest of the people? Then as they had fellowship with God, so did this assure them of their vital unity one with another. Did they follow up the Paschal Feast by presenting their burnt-offering and first-fruits to the Lord? Then were the true worshippers entitled to conclude that they had surrendered themselves to the Lord, and were accepted by Him.

If this were so, then it is plain that to every pious soul in Israel the recurrence of the Passover would prove a source of spiritual blessing and sacred joy. They would rejoice in the Lord, and the joy of the Lord would be their strength. Not more certainly would the sight of the rising Nile send a thrill of hope through the land of Egypt than the prospect of the annual Passover would bring in a new tide of gladness amongst the children of Israel. And it is all the more important to notice this, that herein we find what seems to be the most probable starting-point of the additional item in the paschal meal which was introduced in later centuries. Even a casual reader of the New Testament is struck by the fact that while there was no mention of wine being used at the Egyptian Passover, it forms a most prominent element in the paschal ordinance, as celebrated by Jesus and His disciples. When and why was this feature introduced? Sacred history is silent on the point. All that we

know is, that wine must have been introduced some centuries before the ministry of Jesus on earth, and that too under the guidance of some inspired servant of God, who had the due administration of the Passover at heart.[1] But it would seem only a natural inference that the use of wine had its rise in connection with that feeling of joy which the right observance of the solemnity itself had inspired. The people gave of their first-fruits to the Lord, and themselves therewith. What so fitting as that they should celebrate the surrender by spontaneously drinking at the same time of that juice of the vine which was itself the richest of their fruits, and the noblest symbol of inward joy? Of one thing we may rest assured: it was no capricious innovation, but a change introduced under the sanction of that all-wise Providence which saw in it the germ of the yet more gladdening ordinance of the New Covenant which now holds its place.

3. We are thus brought to the third and last main purpose which the Paschal Feast was designed to serve. Commemorative of the deliverance from Egypt, and symbolical of the blessings the Lord bestowed on His

[1] Referring to this point in connection with Ps. cxvi. 13 ("I will take the cup of salvation," etc.), Dr. J. J. S. Perowne remarks: "Many see in the word an allusion to 'the cup of blessing,' at the paschal meal (Matt. xxvi. 27), and this would accord with the sacrificial language of vers. 14–17. It is true there is no evidence of any such custom at the celebration of the Passover in the Old Testament, but as the custom existed in our Lord's time the only question is as to the time of its introduction. If it was introduced shortly after the Exile, this psalm may very well allude to it."—*The Book of Psalms, in loc.*

redeemed people, it also prefigured the yet greater redemption which was to be carried out in the fulness of the times. For great as was the boon conferred on Israel by the Exodus from Egypt, it was far from being all they needed. As the journey through the wilderness too plainly proved, their greatest foe was still left in their own hearts. It was sin and guilt, and the evil heart of unbelief, that they needed most to be rescued from. And though the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the door-posts had for the time sheltered them from the judgments sent on Egypt, it must have been manifest to every thoughtful spirit amongst them, that a yet higher sacrifice was needed to cover the sin that had stained heart and life, and deliver them from the wrath which was even then revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men. But this, too, the Lord could give. The great "I Am," who with a mighty hand had led the people out of Egypt, could Himself also, in His condescending friendship for sinners, provide a Lamb for a sacrifice that would take away their darkest guilt. And thus it may have happened that as the pious people in Israel continued from year to year to slay the paschal lamb, the thoughts of many hearts may have gone up to the Lord, that He would bring in a yet fuller sacrifice, and procure everlasting redemption for His people. This, at least, we know was the great lesson Jehovah intended to teach them. Every interposition which He made in their behalf

was a prophecy of the great spiritual deliverance yet to come. And every ordinance in which such temporary deliverance was reflected set forth the means by which the later redemption was to be achieved. Hence the slain lamb, so clearly inadequate as a substitute for the immortal souls of guilty men, was not a symbol only but a type—in other words, an anticipation of something of the same kind, but on a much nobler scale, which God had in store, and would bring forth in due time. It took the lapse of many centuries ere even a few of the highest spirits in Israel could be taught to see in what form the better Substitute was to appear. But at last voices did begin to be heard proclaiming that it was to be the Messiah of the people who was to put away sin by the sacrifice of His own soul. When, in the fulness of the times, He did actually enter the world, it was doubtless under an illumining gleam falling on the ancient paschal service that John the Baptist hailed Him as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world.[1] In the immediate prospect of the greater deliverance which the blood of this Divine victim purchased, another feast was instituted. And when the disciples came to study its meaning, as originally declared by their Master, they found that just as the lamb of the Passover paled before the glory of the Lamb of God, so, in the Lord's Supper they had an ordinance in which all that was best in the Paschal Feast was at once reproduced and richly developed.

[1] John i. 29.

CHAPTER II.

The Lord's Last Passover.

Why should it be a desire so strong to share this particular festival before He suffered? There was much, indeed, which appealed to all that was heroic and national in the great annual festival. But there is an element in the longing of Christ above and beyond the feeling of the Israelite. It is the *last* Passover of the true spiritual Israel of God. *His* last, not simply because He must depart out of this world to the Father, but because His departure is the sign that with it the entire system of which the Passover was the crown must disappear.

J. Marshall Lang, D.D.

CHAPTER II.

THE LORD'S LAST PASSOVER.

TO one who keeps in mind the continuous blessing associated with the observance of the Passover, it will cause no surprise to find that Jesus of Nazareth also, in the course of His ministry, paid due regard to the ordinance. In His earliest years He would be trained, like other Jewish children, to give heed to the teaching of the Paschal Feast; nor would He be very old ere He had an opportunity of witnessing the celebration itself. For Joseph, and Mary His mother, were in the habit of joining the other Galilæan Jews in their annual pilgrimage to the feast; and we are told in the records of Luke's Gospel how, when he had reached the age of twelve, Jesus accompanied them on the journey. When he entered on his public career, He did not lay aside this custom. As a member of the Jewish Church, it would be a delight to Him to comply with the requirements of the law. One can imagine with what prayerfulness and hopefulness He would throw His heart into that ancient service which told of the birth of the nation of Israel in days past, and still

bore within its bosom latent hopes of their spiritual regeneration in days to be.

And what Jesus did in this lower relation He would be equally prepared to do in virtue of His high calling, as the Anointed of the Lord. When John would have refrained from baptizing Him, He said in reply that it was necessary for Him, even as Messiah, to comply with the injunctions of the law of Israel: "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness."[1] This same attitude He could not fail to keep up towards that other ordinance, out of which was one day to spring the second sacrament of the Church. As born under law, the Christ would feel bound to attend the Paschal Feast. Only there must always have been, in His experience, an element that separated Him from every other worshipper there. With the perfect insight He had into the whole bearing of the feast on the future progress of the Divine purpose of redemption, it must have been with a peculiarly keen personal interest that He regarded the prospect of taking part in it. As all the prominent features of the solemnity converged in Him, like rays in a focus, so would every one of them come to Him laden with a special message on the sacrifice He was soon to offer. How strongly, as each Paschal Feast came round, would the feeling to which He once gave touching expression again surge in his heart: "I have a baptism to be baptized with"—a yet more trying

[1] Matt. iii. 5.

ordeal to pass through, a yet closer bond of union with sinful men to form—"and how am I straitened till it be accomplished,"[1]

It was this feeling doubtless that, towards the close of the last week of His ministry, led Jesus to give some early intimation of his wish to partake of the Passover with His disciples alone. So much seems to be implied in the words He afterwards used: "With desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer."[2] On previous occasions the disciples may have joined the fellowship of their relatives from Galilee who would doubtless be present at the feast. But at this time, with the prospect of parting from them lying directly before Him, Jesus was to take in their midst the position of the father of the family, and make use of the whole celebration for opening up more fully the origin, worth, and issues of His whole cause, and giving His last directions on the work He was still to carry on in the world. This intention He would indicate as He approached the capital. For the evangelists tell us that Jesus and the disciples joined the caravan of pilgrims from Galilee at Jericho, in the beginning of the Passover week;[3] and the circumstances in which He entered the city for the celebration show that He must have been in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem on the morning of Thursday, the 14th Nisan.

What a marvellous scene the capital and the whole

[1] Luke xii. 50. [2] Luke xxii. 15.
[3] Matt. xx. 29; Mark x. 46; Luke xviii. 35, xix. 2.

surrounding country presented at that time we can well imagine. Almost the whole adult male population of the land would be gathering around the Holy City. From the remotest corners of Palestine, and from many of her distant colonies, hundreds of thousands would be steadily pouring in, till every house in the city, so hospitably thrown open at this time, is occupied, and the suburbs become studded with tents like the encampment of a multitudinous army. These were the hosts of Israel, mustering together to reflect on the deliverance of earlier times, and, under the shadow of present despotism, to cheer their hearts with the hopes of more glorious days yet to come. As the different caravans arrive, the voice of melody is heard floating over the throng. Loud and sweet rise the strains of one and another of the pilgrim psalms. Sings one company,

> "Our feet are standing
> Within Thy gates, O Jerusalem."[1]

Responds another,

> "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem
> So the Lord is round about His people."[2]

Says yet another,

> "Behold how good and how pleasant it is
> For brethren to dwell together in unity."[3]

Thus the vast assemblage "sing in the ways of the Lord," and attune their hearts in some measure for the

[1] Ps. cxxii. 2. [2] Ps. cxxv. 2. [3] Ps. cxxxiii. 1.

quieter solemnities that will be held when forsaking the streets and courts of the city, the worshippers meet in family circles on the Paschal eve.

How Jesus and the disciples prepared to observe the Passover is told by the first three evangelists. Unlike the others, John does not narrate at length the details of the observance. He simply makes a general allusion to the fact that it was duly observed, and then proceeds to set forth the incidents and suggestive lessons to which it gave rise. All of these accounts are of course of equal value for determining the relation of the Paschal Feast to the new ordinance that sprang from it. But it is manifest that we are indebted to Luke for the most consecutive statement of the external circumstances in which the solemnity was held. In particular, we may well take Luke here as our principal guide in determining the exact day and time at which the Passover was celebrated by Jesus and the disciples. This point has been the subject of almost continuous debate through the history of the Church. Relying on such statements of the fourth gospel as that Judas was supposed to have left the upper room to buy those things they had need of against the feast, that the priests and Pharisees on the night before the crucifixion watched against defilement that they might eat the Passover, and that the day of the crucifixion was the day of the Passover, some have inferred that Jesus could not have partaken of the actual Jewish Passover, but only of a supper resembling it, and that

the Thursday on which His company met was not the 14th Nisan, the proper day, but only the 13th, the day before the actual Passover. This conclusion is based on too narrow a view of John's expressions, which refer not so much to the actual day of the Passover as to the feast of the whole week. When we turn to Matthew and read that Jesus said, "Ye know that after two days is the Passover," and "I will eat the Passover at thy house," and further find in Luke that "then came the day of unleavened bread when the Passover must be killed," we feel bound to conclude that this Thursday was the 14th Nisan, the legal day of the Jewish Passover, and that it was of this Passover and nothing short of it that Jesus and the twelve actually there and then partook. According to our mode of reckoning then, we should say that the last Passover of the Lord was held on the evening of Thursday 6th April, A.D. 30.[1]

One great advantage of taking up a definite position on this point is, that we are thereby enabled to form an accurate idea of the special circumstances in which Jesus actually came to partake of the Passover. Along

[1] Beyond briefly indicating our opinion, we have not thought it needful to enter into this controversy. Its importance has been hugely exaggerated, at least for the study of the Supper. The connection of the Supper with the Passover depends on continuity of spiritual purpose, and not on mere coincidence in the time of celebration. Useful and easily accessible discussions of the whole problem will be found in Fairbairn's *Hermeneutical Manual* (Part II. sec. 9); Andrews' *Life of our Lord* (pp. 379-397); and Edersheim's *The Temple, its Ministry and Services* (Appendix).

with the other pilgrims from Galilee, Jesus and the twelve arrived at the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, probably early in the morning of Thursday. It was evidently the original intention of Jesus to spend the succeeding night in the open air in Gethsemane; but He seems to have thought it fitting that the Passover at least should be partaken of in the city. The inhabitants were, as a rule, very ready to afford accommodation for this service; and when the disciples asked Jesus where they were to eat the Passover, He commissioned Peter and John to undertake the work, and gave them a token by which they could have access to the house of a faithful disciple for the purpose. These two disciples, therefore—already close friends, as they were to be cordial associates in greater service afterwards—went in advance, and performed the usual routine of duties which the preparation demanded. Having procured a paschal lamb, they would, some time in the afternoon, bear it up the slopes of the Temple mount, to be killed by themselves in the court. Then they would stand there, with the division of worshippers into which they fell, till their turn came to present the slain victim to the priests. Receiving it back from them they would leave the Temple, and handing the body to the domestics of the house they were to hold the feast in, to be prepared as food, they would await the rest of the disciples on the spot. Thither, while the last beams of the sun were fading from the turrets of the temple, the paschal moon rising

in the blue sky, and the lights beginning to glimmer in the windows of the silent streets, Jesus and His followers came later on; for "when the evening was now come, Jesus sat down with the twelve."

How much this solemnity involved will be best understood if, at this point, we state briefly the order in which the meal was carried out in the time of Jesus. In many respects it had come to differ from the way in which the first or Egyptian Passover was celebrated. At that crisis, the supper was eaten by the members of the family standing and equipped as pilgrims. Now they were often arrayed in festive garments, and, as already sharing in the freedom of a coming victory, they partook of the feast, reclining on couches set around the table. Each guest reclined usually with his left arm resting on the board, so that the right might be free to take the food. In the upper room, for example, John reclined on a couch next to Jesus, and on His right hand, so that his head could rest on the Master's bosom: Judas, it is thought, on His left hand. Simon Peter probably faced John on the other side of the table, and thus could make signs to him when he wanted to hear the meaning of the Master's words. The meal usually began with the head of the family taking in his hands a cup of wine, and giving thanks for the people, in a prayer beginning, "Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, who hast created the fruit of the vine. Blessed art Thou, Jehovah our God, King of the universe." This, the first cup, was then drunk,

and then the company washed their hands. After this introduction, the paschal table was furnished with the elements of the meal; but at first the guests partook only of the bitter herbs, the dishes being removed to arrest the attention of the family, and give an opportunity to the youngest present of asking the meaning of the service, according to the original injunction. When they were brought back, the master of the feast gave a detailed explanation, and after singing a portion of the Hallel (Ps. cxiii., cxiv.), with prayer, a second cup of wine was drunk. Hands were again washed, and when one of the unleavened cakes had been broken, special thanksgiving was made in a prayer which began with such words as these, "Blessed be Thou, our God, King of the world, who bringest forth bread out of the earth."[1] Small portions of the cake, with bitter herbs doubled between them, were then dipped in the thick sauce provided; and then the Paschal Meal, strictly so called, consisting of the bread and herbs and roasted lamb, was begun and carried on to the end. After a third washing of hands, a third cup of wine was filled, and, when a grace after meat had been said and a special thanksgiving offered, it was drunk by all the guests with the utmost solemnity. The feast was brought to a close with a fourth cup of wine, over which was sung the second portion of the Hallel (Ps. cxv.–cxviii.), the whole service concluding

[1] Cf. Lightfoot, *Horæ Hebraicæ*, vol. ii. p. 347 (Oxford); Lange, *Life of Christ*, vol. iii. p. 135 (Clark).

with another thanksgiving, called "the blessing of the song."

Such was the general order of the Paschal Meal. And it is of special importance to have it in view here, because it enables us to appreciate the deeply tender and solemn spirit in which Jesus partook of it at this time. It was with a feeling of intense relief that He found Himself at length seated with the disciples at this, the last Passover He was to witness or partake of on earth. As the words He used implied, He had for a long time looked forward to the occasion; and now that it had arrived, His whole soul rejoiced in the result. Nor does He leave us in any doubt as to what the secret spring of this feeling was. It was the close connection which this Passover was to have with the consummation of the sacrifice in which his whole life was to converge, and by which His whole ministry was to be crowned. "Before I suffer:" here is seen the awful goal towards which He had been steadily setting His face. But a few hours more, and the day would dawn when He should make His soul an offering for sin, and be numbered with the transgressors. That great deed would be done in the midst of an enraged crowd, and in full view of the bitterest foes. Son of God as He was, He was yet so truly human that He would not rush into such an issue of His life without seeking to have His spirit braced for the sacrifice. In this feast He finds an opportunity of being thus strengthened. In the symbols

it spread before Him He beholds the foreshadowings of the long preparation for His redeeming work that had been given by God. By them He is enabled anew to clasp the hand of the Father as it leads Him to the cross; to feel that it is His divine will that He should go thither; and to be assured that He shall be borne through the dread crisis.

But while He is thus prepared for the future in union with the Father, He has the advantage of being still further nerved for the ordeal by a "bright brief hour of fellowship" with the disciples themselves: "With desire have I desired to eat this Passover *with you* before I suffer." Simply as His attached friends and enlisted servants, the guests at this feast were very precious in His eyes. He had received them from the Father, and it wrung His heart with grief to part from them. He could never leave them without doing His uttermost to comfort them and prepare them for the severe sifting through which they were to pass. And the opportunities presented by the freedom of the feast were eagerly embraced by Him for this end. But it gladdened Him to see them there also on His own account. As the shepherd amid the thickening gloom of an advancing storm may find some comfort in the timid flock that clusters round his feet, so was Jesus in some measure helped by the presence of these untried followers. Their love soothed Him at the time; and as with prophetic eye He looked through the vista of the coming years, and saw

the long array of disciples whom they were to win, coming to join His side, clad in the beauties of holiness,[1] and reflecting His image as the myriad dewdrops from the womb of the morning flash back the rays of the sun, even these few followers in the wilderness, soon to be scattered though they were, might yet strengthen His heart with the thought of the joy set before Him, and so help Him to endure the cross and despise the shame. In this way, the last Passover of the Lord's ministry fulfilled a noble function in His experience on earth. Well was it worth being preserved and handed down by Israel unscathed through the past ages of their history, if, at the last, ere it disappeared in His cross, it served to cheer on Him who was "the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world."

[1] Ps. cx. 3.

CHAPTER III.

The Passover merged in the Lord's Supper.

It is remarkable that the apostle fixes the time at which Christ took the bread and the time at which He took the cup. Both data advance his main purpose, which is to mark the essential difference between the Lord's Supper and every other feast. It was instituted on that critical night in which His death was irrevocably determined upon; because it was to be communion with Him in His death. Again, part of the Eucharist accompanied the Paschal Meal, part followed. The New Dispensation was grafted on the Old. Mosaism expired in the throes of Christianity.

Principal T. C. Edwards.

CHAPTER III.

THE PASSOVER MERGED IN THE LORD'S SUPPER.

BY some students of that portion of the evangelic history we are now dealing with, it has been suggested that, on the occasion of the last Passover, Jesus may not have conformed to all the usages of the time. Very probably he did not. He was naturally disposed to reject all that was merely useless in connection with social or ecclesiastial life. Neither, however, does the Gospel narrative leave the impression that the general order of the Paschal Meal was departed from or unduly abridged. In this, Jesus would consider the feeling of the guests, and readily follow the ritual to which they had been accustomed.

This being so, there can be no doubt that Jesus conducted the whole service up to the end of the main portion of the Passover with little else in the way of variation than the foot-washing and a portion of the farewell address. But no sooner was the paschal lamb eaten than a manifest indication of a new ordinance was given. It was regarded as a settled point of order that, after the lamb was consumed, nothing more in the shape of food was to

be taken by any of the guests. But it seems plain that Jesus made a departure from this custom. For after the Passover—"the Supper"—was finished, He took bread and gave thanks, and brake it and gave to the disciples. This could not have taken place in the midst of the Paschal Meal, strictly so called, for then the thanksgiving always followed instead of preceding the breaking of bread. And then it was that the Lord used words such as the disciples could never have anticipated — words in which He manifestly connected this bread with Himself: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me." The point in the service that followed next was the third cup, or, as it had already been called by the Jews, "the cup of blessing;" and on this the Lord fastens, in order to impart to it also a new significance. For when He took the cup, "in like manner after supper," He gave thanks and said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the (New) Covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins."[1] Probably after this new and, to the disciples, very striking interlude, the Lord did not stay to hand round the usual fourth cup, for it is added, that "when they had sung an hymn"—the Hallel already noticed —"they went out to the Mount of Olives."

[1] These quotations are pieced together from the first three evangelists. In the last sentence from Matt. (xxvi. 28) we have been obliged to alter even the Revised Version, which is here palpably inconsistent with itself. For the same word (ἐκχυνόμενον), which is in Matt. rendered "shed," is in Luke "poured out." The last is undoubtedly the right translation. This word is applicable, not to the

What, then, is to be regarded as the meaning of this new injunction in connection with the Paschal Feast? Was it simply as an addition to an unchangeable ordinance that Jesus would have the disciples break bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him? So one might think, if one were to look at the action of Jesus merely in itself, and not in the light of the circumstances in which it was done. But when it is remembered that the Passover, as a whole, had been fixed in the law of Israel, and that, too, in a form the mere details of which Jesus could have no wish to alter; that in its main design it was intended to exhibit what Jesus was to suffer for men; and further, that this last occasion on which Jesus was partaking of it was as nearly as possible coincident with the accomplishment of the very offering to which it pointed, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that Jesus here played the part of the Lord even of the Passover, and intended at this juncture to institute a new and distinct ordinance in which the Passover was to be merged, and by which it was to be superseded. He would never have fixed the attention of the disciples on the two elements of bread and wine, and imparted to them a new significance in connection with the coming sacrifice on the cross; he would

taking of life, but only to the outpouring of the shed blood on the altar. The present participle points to the eternal efficacy of the blood of Jesus, "which is being ever poured out for you." Cf. Rendall, *Theology of the Hebrew Christians*, p. 123 (Macmillan); also the suggestive note of Dr. Milligan, *The Resurrection of our Lord*, Appendix, p. 274 (Macmillan, 1890).

never, especially, have laid on the disciples the pointed injunction to repeat the same actions in remembrance of Himself, unless He had intended to set up a new Christian Supper.

And this full meaning of the Master's conduct the disciples also would in due time recognise. Amid the darkness and trouble that shrouded this farewell gathering, they might not be able to see the real character of the precious legacy that Jesus was handing over to them. This was just because they could not as yet contemplate the true meaning of the great events of His career, which it was meant to symbolise and illustrate. But when Jesus had risen from the dead, and when, perhaps under His own guidance, they had had time to reflect on what their Master had done in the Passover; and particularly, when after Pentecost they were enlightened in the knowledge of all that Jesus had commanded them, their views of it would be clarified and enlarged. In the light of the higher redemption thus accomplished they could not but see that the Passover was no longer intended to endure; that the consummation of the deliverance from sin to which the paschal observance only pointed required a richer and simpler ordinance; and that in the Lord's Supper the need for such a memorial was amply met. The frequency and delight with which they broke bread from house to house in the new Christian community at Jerusalem testify to some such accession of spiritual insight into its meaning and power. And the overmastering hold the Supper thus came to take of their

mind and affections is yet further evident from the fact that, even in the course of their missionary tours, it became a rallying point for the disciples and a source of consolation in all the toils of life and service.

A further advantage arising from this view of the origin of the Supper is, that it enables us to perceive clearly the way in which the Passover was merged in the new ordinance, and even the grounds on which this method was chosen. For the Lord's Supper did not, as is often fancied, spring up alongside the Passover as a distinct ordinance, and then supersede it. It arose out of the Passover by two elements of the original feast being no longer required to express the character of the Divine salvation, and therefore dropping off like dead branches from a tree; while the other two were found to be capable of exhibiting, in symbolic form, the new grace Jesus by His death was to bring in: that is to say, the Lord Jesus found it necessary to lay aside the lamb and the bitter herbs (including the *charoseth*),[1] while He retained and loaded with new meaning the eating and drinking of the bread and wine. The lamb was omitted from the Christian Supper because, as we have seen, the great event to which it pointed was on the eve of being fulfilled in the death Jesus was to die on Calvary. There was to

[1] Alford (John xiii. 26) identifies the bitter herbs and the *charoseth*. This is a mistake. The herbs were such as endive, lettuce, succory, and horehound. The *charoseth* was a compound of figs, dates, and raisins mingled with vinegar, in which the bread and herbs were dipped. It was to the dish containing this sauce that Jesus alluded. Cf. Lightfoot, *ut supra;* Edersheim, *The Temple*, etc., p. 204.

be thenceforth no more need of its being continually presented to the view of the faithful, because even after death Jesus Himself was to be the Lamb as it had been slain, ever living in the midst of the throne. Before the very glory of the crucified Saviour indeed this symbol must have fled away, as the stars pale and vanish in the light of the rising sun. The bitter herbs also were laid aside, for the memory of the bitter bondage under Egypt—that is, under sin—was to be swallowed up in the joy of a real and everlasting salvation. The bread and the wine were alone fastened on and kept; because, on the one hand, in the light of Jesus' whole past teaching concerning Himself as the bread of life and the food of the world, and on the other, in the light of the great symbolic ceremony of the older dispensation we have yet to study—namely, the ratification of the first or Sinaitic Covenant—these two elements were capable above all others of exhibiting what He, as the Crucified One, could be to the souls of those who received His grace. To the end of time they were to remain in the Supper separate from one another, and yet collocated, that they might tell of a Saviour who gave up His soul for sin and left His lifeless body on the tree; and yet at the same time exhibit a Saviour who, through death, lives to minister eternal life and imperishable sustenance to all who trust and obey Him.

This being so, no long explanation is needed to point out also the exceeding fitness of the precise time chosen by Jesus for effecting this great change. From

the economic point of view this is very manifest. The day on which the Lord had already entered ere he instituted the Supper was the turning-point in the progress of the Divine saving purpose on earth, the day when the long centuries of preparation came to an end and the era of accomplishment dawned, the day to which all past history had looked forward, and from which a new and higher career for the souls of men was to take its rise. If the new Supper was to be a monument of the great sacrifice by which this grand result was to be achieved, and a token of the saving power it was to exert, no more appropriate time for its first celebration could be fixed than the eve of the day on which Jesus was to be crucified. This has been already so far explained. But it has yet to be noticed in what an attractive light the choice of this critical stage in His career sets the love of Jesus Himself. "The Lord Jesus, the same night in which He was betrayed, took bread." So writes the Apostle Paul to the Corinthians, and evidently because, to his mind, the peculiar position in which He was placed at the time lent a new beauty and significance to the ordinance itself. We see things in their true colour best when they stand by the side of their opposites. Light is sweetest in contrast with darkness; love in contrast with hate; loyalty in contrast with treachery. The conduct of Judas gave Jesus ample opportunity of exhibiting the character of His love. How often does it happen that the alienation of a few turns aside the beneficence of one who would

otherwise have been a friend to a large community. If the least element of self-seeking had found place in the heart of Jesus, how easily might He have been led to abandon His purpose of mercy on the night in which He was betrayed. But it could not be so. He washed the feet of the traitor, if by any means He might save him, even at the eleventh hour. And having loved His own which were in the world, He loved them to the uttermost,[1] with a love that many waters could not quench, nor the floods drown.

Hence also this was the night best fitted to display the exceeding worth and grace of the Supper to the disciples themselves. It was the last night of Jesus' earthly sojourn amongst them. By the treachery of one of His followers, and the hate of the world, He was to be bereft of everything His heart could hold dear. He was to part with life itself; and as He never had anything in the shape of earthly goods or possessions—"He had not where to lay His head"—so there was nothing of this kind He could bestow as a legacy. His very clothing was to fall into the hands of His foes. Yet made poor for our sakes as He was, He would not leave His companions without a parting gift. And it was for this end, amongst others, the Supper was instituted. "Do this," said He, "in remembrance of me." Every time they celebrated the Supper they would have a means of holding Him in adoring recollection. Yet, while this would be pleasing to Him, it was not for His sake

[1] John xiii. 1 (εἰς τέλος).

alone, or even chiefly, that it was to be so used. To the disciples it was to be a parting gift, and as valuable as it would prove enduring. For it would abide as a medium of receiving blessing from Him, even after He had gone from them into heaven. Other channels of grace they had enjoyed richly. But they were to find none more precious than that in using which they gathered around the Supper table, to eat bread and drink wine in remembrance of Him. For the living Saviour would then be still in their midst to supply all their need out of the riches of His deathless love.

On the whole, therefore, it must be acknowledged that the change which the Lord Jesus made in the Passover is seen to be entirely justified by its own nature, the circumstances in which it was made, and the new facts it had to represent. This will appear more distinctly as the true function of the Supper is more fully unfolded. But even at this stage of the exposition we have before us enough to be struck by the way in which the Supper at once absorbs all that the Passover foreshadowed, and serves all its main purposes on a higher plane.

1. The first main end of the Paschal Feast was to keep fresh in the memory of the people the great deliverance which the Lord wrought for them at the outset of their national history. Each new generation was thereby reminded how, at the time of the Exodus from Egypt, when the judgments of heaven were descending on the land, Jehovah had respect to the

blood of the slain lamb sprinkled on the houses of the Israelites, and passed over them in peace. The first purpose served by the Lord's Supper is exactly parallel to this. As Israel had to be delivered out of the bondage of Egypt, so had men everywhere to be set free from the domination of sin. This was accomplished by the death of Jesus on Calvary. The blood of the Lamb of God was shed for many for the remission of sins. And as He, the true Israel, made His exodus out of the scene of His humiliation on earth, so did all that were to be His there and then virtually receive their manumission from the bondage of iniquity. Very fitting it was, surely, that this great event should be commemorated in some visible ordinance of the Church of Christ; that so the minds of each succeeding generation of the ever-growing society might be constantly turned back to contemplate the mighty hand and outstretched arm with which Jesus had set His people free and led them into a larger life.

This is what the Lord's Supper most effectively does. Granted that the outward form of the death of Jesus is not so distinctly mirrored in the Supper as in the whole rites of the Passover, yet every one sees that it is represented there. The separated bread and wine—so suggestive of the body and blood of a truly human life — do speak of the Lord giving up His spirit in death into the hands of the Father. And, if the attention of the participant is less fastened on

the precise way in which this death was undergone, there is the greater counter-balancing advantage that the fact of the death is more directly associated with the ever-living Lord who so died. For this is what Jesus Himself plainly desires. "Do this," said He, "in remembrance of me." He would not have His death commemorated apart from His person. The recollection of His sacrifice on Calvary is ever to be joined with the ceaseless contemplation of Himself as living in heaven. The one fact is fitted to suggest the other, and, in the intention of the Lord, ought to do so. A bereaved family, thinking of a deceased mother, and brooding ever on the image of her life, feels that she seems to be once again present in their midst, shedding abroad the sweet fragrance of her companionship as in earlier days. So, when a devout soul simply thinks of Christ dying on the tree, there may naturally come into the heart a sweet sense of His presence. But this indispensable and most potent element of Christian experience is not to be left to the spiritual imagination only. As the Lamb that was slain, Jesus has in Himself still the full worth and efficacy of His death. And the supreme charm of the Supper is that it enables us, through the Spirit, so to remember Him as the Saviour that died, that we shall thereby get into close fellowship with Him as a Lord that is alive for evermore.

2. This truth comes out yet more fully when we think of another main purpose which the Supper

serves. It was said that the Passover was a source of continuous blessing to Israel. It brought down upon them the favour and protection of Jehovah when duly observed at the first; but as the people continued to celebrate it, this blessing was also constantly bestowed. It was, in short, a recognised means of receiving grace from Jehovah, their heavenly King. This great function, also, the Lord's Supper nobly fulfils. We have seen that the remembrance of Jesus, which it helps us to cherish, leads us directly into personal fellowship with Him. From this it naturally follows, that being thus in communion with Christ we also receive from Him, in the Supper, new blessing and strength and joy, according to our faith. This is, of course, nothing essentially new to the believer. Wherever a disciple is living the life he lives in the flesh, in the faith of the glorified Son of God, out of His fulness he receives even grace for grace. "Because I live, ye shall live also"[1] is true for all the centuries. But in order fully to enjoy this union, we have to use the special media laid open to us, just as we slake our thirst at the spring where it bursts through the rock. And how bountiful is it on God's part that, in addition to the ordinary means of reaching the living water, such as the word and prayer, we have also given to us, and ever and anon thrown open to us, the additional means prepared in the Holy Supper. This is set before us as a perennial source of blessing. What men have fancied of the stream that flowed from

[1] John xiv. 19.

Horeb, following the children of Israel, is here realised in fact: "We drink of the rock that follows us, and that Rock is Christ."[1] Very sweet and assuring is it to a true disciple to see in the bread and wine signs of the Crucified One. But, in the hands of a believer, these signs are also a channel through which that same living Lord is prepared to bless us and fill us unto all the fulness of God.[2]

3. To complete the parallel we have in view we have but to mention another main purpose which the Supper served. It was said of the Passover that, while leading the people to look back to a past deliverance and up to their everlasting King, it also encouraged them to look forward to fresh manifestations of His grace in the future. The Lord's Supper is based on the ample fulfilment of these expectations. For it testifies of a Divine Saviour come to die, and now reigning to bless. But the Supper itself also has this same threefold reference. As it teaches every Christian disciple to recall the cross through which the ascended Saviour was made accessible, and binds him over also to abide in Christ as the one source of life, it also urges him to look forward to the very consummation of the Divine purpose of love itself. He who, in the fulness of time, came into the world to die for sin is to come a second time without sin unto salvation. At that grand era the children of God gathered into one, from all the ages and from all the nations, shall be welcomed into the banquet-hall

[1] 1 Cor. x. 4. [2] Eph. iii. 19.

of Heaven. Of this everlasting feast, yet awaiting His disciples, the Lord's Supper is a pledge and in some sort an anticipation, even now. "For," as the Apostle Paul wrote, "as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come."[1] So long as the Lord tarries, we have this ordinance in which we may draw closer to Him and to one another in the festal joy of earth. But when He Himself is manifested, the Supper will no longer be needed in its present form, and we shall meet Him in the festal joy of heaven. "For in Thy presence is fulness of joy; at Thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."[2] In this hope we have probably the key to the striking utterance of Jesus in closing the Supper. "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's Kingdom."[3] This new spiritual fellowship Jesus has even now, so far, in the society of faithful disciples at His table. For there the Elder Brother meets the children of the Royal Family of heaven, and feeds them with the bread and wine of His crucified life. Drawn together by the Spirit of adoption in their hearts, crying, "Abba, Father," and made consciously kings and priests unto God, they share with Him in the enjoyment of a truly new and regal banquet. But Jesus is to exercise the prerogative of presiding at the table of His brethren yet more manifestly and richly

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 26. [2] Ps. xvi. 11. [3] Matt. xxvi. 29.

hereafter in the immediate presence of the Father: "Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."[1] "For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."[2] And each fresh opportunity of partaking of our present symbolic feast is meant to make the hope of sharing in this blessed repast stronger and brighter to the end. For "there," as one has beautifully said, "whatsoever associations of joy, of invigoration, of festal fellowship, clustered round the wine cup here, shall be brightened, purified, and perpetuated in the calm raptures of the heavenly feast, in which He will be a partaker as well as giver and food. 'Thou shalt make them drink of the river of Thy pleasure.' The King's lips touch the golden cup with unfoaming wine ere he commends it to His guests. And from that feast they 'go no more out,' neither shall the triumphant music of its great 'hymn' be followed by any Olivet or Gethsemane, or any denial, or any Calvary; but there shall be no more sorrow, nor sin, nor death, for the former things are passed away, and He has made all things new."[3]

In this way, it will be seen, the Lord's Supper is well entitled to be regarded as fulfilling more richly the leading purposes of the Passover. Looking back to the past, it says to believers, "Ye died:" looking

[1] Rev. xix. 9. [2] Rev. vii. 17.
[3] Dr. A. Maclaren: S.S. Lesson on Lord's Supper.

up in the present, it proclaims, "For your life is hid with Christ in God:" looking forward to the future it adds, "When Christ who is our life shall be manifested, then shall ye also be manifested with Him in glory."

On the whole, the Christian Supper is seen to be superior to the Passover, alike in its adaptation to the accomplishment of redemption, to the spirituality of the New Covenant and to the wider Christian community in which it was to take so prominent a place. For one thing, it is much simpler and less cumbrous than the Paschal Feast. The Passover required much preparation; the elements of the Supper are always ready at hand. The Supper is also more expressive—at once dealing with higher truths and opening up their significance more freely. It is also more capable of universal adoption. The Passover was a distinctively Jewish feast, and had features about it that would perhaps have proved repellent to other nations. In having simply bread and wine—food of every people—for its elements, the Supper commends itself to all the world. It thus becomes an ordinance specially suited for combination with the forms of social worship. Though observed religiously by Israel as a whole, the Passover was radically a private family observance; the Supper belongs to the public service of the congregations of the Church in every age and every clime. The Passover was celebrated but once a year; the Supper may be observed as frequently as the necessity or prospect of edification may warrant—"till He come."

CHAPTER IV.

—o—

The Ratification of the First Covenant.

The grand peculiarity in this service was manifestly the division of the blood between Jehovah and the people, and the sprinkling of the latter with the portion appropriated to them. . . . Thus they shared part and part with God : the pure and innocent life He provided and accepted in their behalf became (symbolically) theirs ; a vital and hallowed bond united the two into one ; God's life was their life ; God's table their table ; and, as a further sign of this conjunction of feeling and interest, they partook of the meat of their peace-offerings which formed the second kind of sacrifice presented.

Principal P. Fairbairn.

CHAPTER IV.

THE RATIFICATION OF THE FIRST COVENANT.

WE have just seen how the Passover originally instituted in connection with the deliverance from Egypt surrendered its richest contents as symbols of the Christian redemption. It is the Paschal Feast alone, therefore, that can be considered as strictly the real progenitor of the Lord's Supper. To it must we ever be indebted for our first and deepest insight into the meaning of the New Testament ordinance. But the Passover is not the only rite of the Old Testament which the Lord Jesus connected with the Supper, and whose place the Supper to some extent takes. In each of the three accounts of the institution of the Supper, given by the Evangelist, the Master in distributing the wine makes a distinct reference to a special Covenant with which His coming death or sacrifice was bound up: "For this is My blood of the Covenant which is being poured out for many;"[1] "This cup is the New Covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you,"[2] "unto the

[1] Mark xiv. 24. [2] Luke xxii. 20.

remission of sins." [1] How did the Lord Jesus come to use this form of speech?

In the first place, we think, because He knew Himself to be the appointed Mediator and Surety of the New Covenant which had already been so distinctly promised in the prophetic scriptures, as sure to come and supersede the first or Sinaitic Covenant,[2] now waxing old and ready to perish; and in the second place, because the death He was about to die on Calvary held to this New Covenant the same relation as the sacrifices which Moses offered in connection with the ratification of that first Covenant held to it. The similarity of the language used in each case seems to put this reference beyond doubt.[3] "Behold," said Moses, "the blood of the covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words." If the statements of Jesus cannot be taken to be the language of direct citation they at least show that the whole incident recorded in the twenty-fourth chapter of Exodus held a prominent place in His mind at the time, and that He intended the ordinance of the Supper to receive a large portion of its import from being studied in connection with the ritual which Moses had of old carried out on that occasion.

The events recorded in this chapter are evidently the natural sequel of the great deliverance, of which

[1] Matt. xxvi. 28. [2] Jeremiah xxxi. 31.

[3] This position is admirably maintained by K. F. A. Kahnis: *Die Lehre vom Abendmahle*, ss. 67-84. Leipzig, 1851.

the Passover was the memorial. To such an alliance betwixt Jehovah and the children of Israel the victorious Exodus from Egypt could not fail to tend. In the third month after leaving the land of bondage the people were led into the wilderness and ordered to encamp there before the Mount. Already they had halted by the way at various places for short periods. But now they must fix their abode for nearly a year to come, that they may be fully organised as the people of the Lord. For this purpose they were led aside from the beaten tracks of the desert into a part of the Sinaitic range, where two wide valleys converge and form a plain wide enough to contain their vast encampment. It was there and then that Jehovah brought formally before them the proposal to enter into a specific Covenant with the tribes of Israel, to the effect that He should be their God and King and they His obedient and blessed people: "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my Covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me from among all peoples: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests and an holy nation."[1] The overture was at once accepted: "All the people answered and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do." And when, amid circumstances fitted to impress the people with the majesty and grace and condescension of the Divine monarch, the conditions of the Covenant on the part of

[1] Ex. xix. 5, 6.

the people, and the special blessings the Lord was to bestow, had been yet more distinctly enunciated, and the people once again declared publicly their willingness to accept them,[1] Moses was ordered to take steps for the ratification of the Covenant with due solemnity and gladness.

In the East, at the time of the Exodus, there were various methods of ratifying a covenant, or alliance between two parties, in use. There was, for example, the form in which each of the two covenanters offered up sacrifices and then also mingled their own blood upon one altar, thereby probably indicating that they were both thenceforth in possession of a common life, which was accordingly to be kept sacred from violence. This was the method chiefly in use amongst heathen tribes, and it could not be reproduced in the service of Jehovah. Then there was the form in which, after sacrifices had been offered, the victims were divided into halves set at a distance over against each other, and the parties to the agreement solemnly passed through the open space. This action perhaps meant that the life of each party was thenceforth invested with a sacred interest, over which no other obligation could prevail. This was the method adopted by the Lord in confirming the covenant with Abraham, and probably also by the kings of Israel in later renewals of the Sinaitic Covenant itself.[2] But perhaps the commonest ritual for ratifying a covenant was that

[1] Ex. xx. 19 ; Deut. v. 27. [2] Jer. xxxiv. 19.

employed by Jacob and Laban when they resolved to part and live at peace. They united in offering up sacrifices to God upon one altar and thereafter partook of a common meal together, the sacrifices being probably intended to invoke the witness of God upon the transaction, and the meal to signify that they were thenceforth to be at one in heart and life.

It was evidently according to this last form that Moses was ordered to conduct the ritual for ratifying the Sinaitic Covenant. For no sooner was the summary of the civil and ceremonial enactments which the people were to observe along with the Ten Words concluded, than Moses received directions to set about the preparation of the meal in which he and other representatives of the people were to take part in the presence of the Lord.[1] Only, in this case it was indispensable that the utmost prominence should be given to the sacrificial part of the ritual. In ordinary circumstances, that is, when a covenant was made betwixt man and man, this may have been regarded simply as a solemn preliminary to the meal. But here, where sinful men are to be brought into relations of permanent friendship with a holy God, it was necessary that all the people should have an opportunity of witnessing and, as far as possible, taking part in the service, by which, according to the well established meaning of certain sacrificial actions, sin was regarded as covered or atoned for,

[1] Ex. xxiv. 1–2.

and all risk of incurring death and danger certainly removed.

It was already assumed that the whole service was to be carried out under the immediate direction of Moses as the chief representative of the nation. It was impossible for the people as a whole to take part in the offering of the sacrifices, nor was it to be expected that they should join in the festal meal. Moses, therefore, as the divinely appointed leader of the tribes, naturally took the principal place in ordering the whole ritual. This indeed was what the people themselves wished, even in view of the Divine intention to give all of them a really priestly standing. For when Jehovah began to display the more striking outward tokens of His Divine sovereignty, the people expressly desired Moses to take the part of mediator betwixt them and the Lord. "Speak thou with us and we will hear," said they to him, "but let not God speak with us, lest we die;"[1] or, as it is more fully given in Deuteronomy, "Go thou near and hear all that the Lord our God shall say, and speak thou unto us all that the Lord our God shall speak unto thee; and we will hear it and do it."[2] As on a similar occasion, centuries later, the Lord took the people at their word, though to their own spiritual loss: He accepted Moses as the mediator betwixt Himself and the tribes. On this occasion, he directs Moses to take into co-operation with him, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, as representa-

[1] Ex. xx. 19. [2] Deut. v. 27.

tives of the priestly function of the people, and seventy of the elders as representatives of the nation itself.[1]

These preliminaries being thus arranged, the first point to which Moses addressed himself was to obtain a yet more formal acceptance of the conditions of the Covenant on the part of the people. This had already been given, so far as the Ten Words were concerned, and provisionally as regards the rest of the enactments. But this acceptance must be made in a form still more distinct and intelligible. So he comes down from the cloud-capped summit of the mountain to the wide plain where the tents of the people had been spread. A vast and eager multitude, with the elders in front, encircle him on every side. And there, like a faithful ambassador, Moses rehearses all the judgments which the Lord bade him set forth as the code under which they must live, if they were to be a truly consecrated people. From ten thousand throats echoes back the response that they are prepared to accept the heaven-coined statutes. In view of all the future, it was well that this many-voiced consent should be so cordially given. The whole Covenant into which they were to enter was to be alike strict and permanent in its obligations; and the object of these repeated proposals to the people was doubtless to place it beyond question for all time, that no unreasoning despotism had been applied on the part of the Lord, but that the terms

[1] Cf. Kurtz, *History of the Old Covenant*, vol. iii. p. 140 (Clark); Fairbairn, *Typology*, vol. ii. p. 393; also Lange and Kalisch, *in loc.*

of the alliance had been accepted by the people of their own free-will. On hearing this third expression of the people's consent to the conditions of the King, Moses made a provisional copy of all the enactments, that had as yet been announced, in a parchment roll, which is spoken of later on as "the book of the covenant."

The announcement of the terms of the Covenant would seem to have been the principal work of one whole day, for it is added that "early in the morning," that is, next morning, Moses set about preparing the scene for the sacrifices and the sacred meal, which he had been commanded to carry out. This he did by first of all piling up an altar of unhewn stones under the mount, to serve at once as a symbol of Jehovah's presence and as a table on which the offerings might be presented to Him. But the people, too, had a part to play in this great transaction; and since they could not as a body be actually on the scene, Moses had also to set up twelve stone pillars, which were not mere memorials in behalf of the tribes but visible tokens of their presence and participation in the business. The eyewitness of the parties immediately concerned being thus provided for, the offering of the sacrifices might be carried through. This duty Moses entrusted to young men of the various tribes of Israel, who, in the absence of any official priesthood, acted as representatives alike of the ruling families of the people and of the whole national life in its fullest

vigour. As befitted the occasion, the offerings were of the highest possible value and were expressive as well of the expiation of sin which the tribes so much needed as of the new fellowship of peace with God and with one another into which the people hoped by this league to be now received. For the young men "offered burnt-offerings and sacrificed peace-offerings of oxen unto the Lord."

The whole scene on which the people were directing their gaze at this time must have been very impressive. Nature herself lends all her grandest features to the occasion.[1] Right in front of the assembled host rise abruptly from the plain the precipitous cliffs on which Jehovah had for the time taken up His abode. The clouds that wreathe their peaks show where His throne has been planted. At the foot of the mountain, and separated by a series of low mounds from the vast level reaches where the tents cluster, is seen the wide circle of pillars which represent the people, and in the midst of them the huge pile, which is set apart as the altar of the heavenly King. There, under the direction of Moses, surrounded by his staff of white-robed elders, the young men carry out their appointed task. The smoke rising from the altar in view of the people, and wafting the odour of burning flesh all around,

[1] Stanley (*Sinai and Palestine*, pp. 42–44) identifies the mount as Jebel-Mûsa, and the plain as Wâdy er-Râhah. Cf. Geikie, *Hours with the Bible*, ii. p. 262.

tells them that the sacrifice by which they are being bound in a holy league with Jehovah is being consummated.

But if the whole spectacle before the people was thus very grand and striking, no less momentous was the real nature of the transaction which occupied it. It was the formation of an alliance with God that concerned the nation as a whole; and one cannot wonder that Moses should feel called on to present the ritual of the sacrifice with all possible fulness of detail, in order to bring home to the people yet more practically and distinctly the fact that they were now embraced in a new and solemn engagement. The course which he followed shows that he was fully awake to the necessity of quickening the conscience of the people, and rousing them to a sense of the obligations they were assuming. Receiving the blood of all the victims from the young men, Moses set aside one-half of it in basins, and sprinkled the other half on the altar. He then produced the roll containing the laws and enactments which the Lord enjoined on Israel as a condition of their being received into covenant union with Himself, and, approaching nearer to the camp, read it in the audience of the people or of those who could communicate with them. On hearing the terms it set forth the people still more explicitly acquiesced, saying for the last time, "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient."[1]

[1] Ex. xxiv. 7.

Moses then took the blood which he had reserved and, doubtless with stalks or bunches of hyssop, sprinkled it on as many of the people as he could reach, saying, "Behold, the blood of the Covenant which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

The meaning of the first action on the part of Moses cannot be matter of doubt to any one who understands the fundamental idea of bloody sacrifice. What the people needed to be taught at this time was that they were all alike sinful in heart and life, and that they had to acknowledge their guilt and have it taken away ere they could be received into fellowship with the thrice-holy Jehovah as their heavenly King. Hence a portion of the blood was first poured out on the altar of the Lord. This was intended to show them their sin, and yet at the same time assure them that the pardon they needed had been graciously provided by the Lord Himself. Since the life that was in the blood of the victims really stood for the life of the people, when this blood was poured out on the Divine altar the people were taught to see their own life brought through the deserved penalty of death into fellowship with Jehovah again.[1] Thus what the people themselves could not achieve was at once obtained by the use of the sacred provision which the Lord Himself had made. By the shedding of blood and its accept-

[1] We speak here, of course, of the lesson intended by the Lord. It is highly improbable that many of the people were able to apprehend it at this time.

ance on His altar there was remission of sins. But this blessing was not all that Israel as the children of God required. Corrupt as well as guilty, if they were to be a truly sanctified people they needed, along with the forgiveness of sins, a new inward life in the growing strength of which they could escape the pollutions of the world and walk worthy of their heavenly King. And it was this, as we conceive, that was presented in symbol by the sprinkling of the blood on the people themselves. Assuring them still more fully that the guilt of their sins was blotted out, this action was also meant to teach them that the new life of acceptance with the Lord, which had by the sacrifice been secured, was now given over to them in their own hearts, to be lived out by them in the strength of grace divine. As forgiven, they could live with God: as sprinkled, they were to live in God and for God. So forgiven and so sanctified they might hope to become a people wholly consecrated to the service and glory of Jehovah, their life hid with Him, and secure in His love and power for evermore.

This fundamental part of the transaction being thus carried out, Moses was set free to enter on the last and, in one view, the crowning element of the whole ceremonial, namely, the sacred meal which he and his kinsmen and the seventy elders were to partake of in the presence of God at the foot of the Mount. The expiatory action with the blood had introduced the people into a life that was in union and communion

with God. The sprinkling of it upon their own persons had assured them that this life would growingly manifest its power in all their future experience. But this new fellowship must now receive an expression which would yet more fully exhibit and confirm what by the sacrifices had been attained. And this is found in the feast at the foot of the Mount. After what of the peace-offerings that fell to the young men themselves had been duly prepared as food there went up towards the higher ground, at the base of the royal throne, Moses and Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, and held a high festal banquet together. Three features of this communion feast of the Old Covenant are to be specially noted.

1. Representatives of all ranks of the people took part in it—Moses as leader, Aaron and his sons as destined for the priesthood, and the elders as standing for the nation.

2. They enjoyed special manifestations of the Divine presence. Although there could not be, and was not, any direct representation of the Lord Himself or of His glory, yet there was an object of surpassing radiance and beauty, which convinced them that they were in His court. They saw God by the faith which was in their hearts; and in the footstool of heavenly blue which overhung the place where they met, and the bright flashing flame of light that gleamed around it, there was a visible accompaniment of this inward presence which must have uplifted their souls and

inspired them with holy joy. This golden fire was hid from the people by the clouds which encompassed the Mount. But up on the slopes around its base this company of nobles was permitted to behold the radiance; and so they "saw the God of Israel," as mortal man could see Him and live.

3. Hence, as in the midst of this vision they ate and drank, other viands having been added to the flesh of the peace-offerings, there was a deep sense of entire safety and security. It was a common maxim in Israel that no man could see God and live. By the wondrous grace of the Lord, the guests at this feast felt their life only exalted and enriched. For in this whole banquet, as they doubtless afterwards told, they discerned the symbols of blessings all might yet enjoy, seals of what had been promised and first-fruits of what were yet to come.

Such, then, is a brief account of the way in which the Covenant of Jehovah, God of Gods and Lord of Lords, with the children of Israel, was ratified. It was the third great league of the kind He had made with man. The first was entered into with Noah after the flood, and under it the whole race still lives. The second was with Abraham; and into this, too, every one who accepts the offer of the Gospel may be said to be received. The third was that which we have just reviewed. Far more external in form and complicated in details than the others, it exercised a mighty influence on the whole career of the people of

Israel, only however to pass away with the destruction of the national polity. But, like the other two, it may be said to exist in essence still; for it has given all its richest ideas to that greater and universal Covenant of grace into which God now calls every creature under heaven. Looked at in the light of this development, the ratification of this Covenant at Sinai was an event of deep moment for the life of the whole race. For here God and man are drawn together as never before; and bonds of sympathy are knit between them out of which some grander manifestation of love cannot but flow. Here, indeed, is seen a stage in the progress of redemption that, as it stands next to the incarnation and the cross, also distinctly foreshadows them. For in Israel God now has a nation on earth which He has called out of Egypt to be His own. The fitting culmination of this event is found only in the advent and sacrifice of that Son of God and Son of Man over whom the Father from heaven says, "This is My Son, My Chosen: hear ye Him."[1]

[1] Luke ix. 35.

CHAPTER V.

—o—

The Lord's Supper in the Reception of the New Covenant.

That the covenant of reconciliation and peace might be established on a solid, satisfactory, and permanent basis, it was necessary, not only that there should be the shedding of blood, but also that it should be blood having a common relation to both the contracting parties, and as such, fit to become the blood of reconciliation. Such in the strictest sense was the blood of Jesus; and in it, therefore, we discern the real bond and only sure foundation of a covenant of peace between man and God.

Principal P. Fairbairn.

CHAPTER V.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE RECEPTION OF THE NEW COVENANT.

IMPRESSIVE as the whole ceremony of ratifying the Sinaitic Covenant must have been, alike to the tribes and to the chief men who were permitted to take part in the feast that followed, the people were not long in showing how superficial their professions of allegiance to the Lord were. The promise of obedience so readily given was indeed but lightly held. Not many suns rose and set till the Covenant was publicly violated; and, later on, after Israel had been settled in Canaan, long periods occurred when it was utterly set at nought. It is true that once and again, as in the days of Hezekiah and Josiah, solemn renewals of the Covenant were made. But these could not take the place of the first ratification, and their beneficial effects were very short-lived. In point of fact, it was not until the long exiles in Assyria and Babylon had humbled the people and purified their moral sentiments, and taught them by patent contrasts with the life of heathendom the higher value of their own law,

that, on their restoration to Canaan, they were really prepared to make an honest attempt to comply with the conditions to which of old they had been so forward to subject themselves.

Such inveterate defection on the part of the people could not escape the notice of the prophets whom the Lord had appointed to guide them. The treachery into which they fell was denounced, and judgment was threatened. Yet this was not all. As the rainbow is seen spanning the storm-cloud, so did the picture of coming wrath only present a dark background on which was set the promise of richer blessing. Thus it is very specially in the ministry of Jeremiah. When, after a recent public renewal, the Covenant of the Lord had been again violated, the prophet appears as the messenger of heaven and foretells the sacking of Jerusalem and the exile in Babylon. But he does not leave the faithful remnant without hope. Right overhead of the sad fate of the once favoured people rises the bright hope of a new era for them and for all the world. This culminates in the promise of a new solemn league and covenant, into which Jehovah is to enter with all Israel: "Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, that I will make a new covenant, with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah: not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to bring them out of the land of Egypt; which my covenant they brake, although I was an husband unto

them, saith the Lord. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord:' for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember no more."[1] What a blessing is here held forth can be felt only when the characteristics of the alliance as a whole are clearly discerned.

The first feature in it which arrests our attention is, that it is to be *inward and spiritual* in its operation: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their hearts will I write it." The law of Sinai was written with the finger of God on two tables of stone. Along with the other statutes given to the people it was intended primarily to change men from without, moulding first the outward conduct, and so reaching the inner life. Under the new alliance which the Lord was to introduce, it was the soul that was to be first touched. The law was to be written by the Spirit on the fleshly tables of the heart.

In this way the New Covenant was to be really *reciprocal*. God and men were to be knit together in a new conscious fellowship in which they would have

[1] Jer. xxxi. 31-34.

a mutual choice, a mutual possession and a mutual sympathy: "And I will be their God, and they shall be my people." For, as one has truly said, "Only a heart in which the law has been livingly written and in which it dwells, that is, only a human will which has thus become one with the Divine will, and thus free, can continue in covenant with God."[1]

Hence it follows that this Covenant is also both *gracious* and *real*. The Sinaitic Covenant was largely symbolic and typical. It simply represented spiritual blessings, and so foreshadowed their future coming. But the New Covenant is full of grace and truth. It is a channel of the very blessings which we most need. Have men first to be acquainted with God ere they can be at peace? The promise is, "They shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them." The Lord Himself will impart this knowledge. Does every soul that comes to know God need to be constantly forgiven ere it can abide in fellowship with Him? This, too, is provided: "for I will forgive their iniquity and remember their sin no more."

From this it flows that the New Covenant here offered must be *universal*—that is, it is open to the whole human family. True, this is not expressly stated in this passage. It is Israel only that the prophet has in view. Yet the spirit of these utterances is undoubtedly in the direction of extending the privileges of the Covenant to others beyond their pale. Jerusalem

[1] Cf. E. Nägelsbach in Lange, *in loc.* (Clark.)

itself is to have its bounds widened, so as to take in suburbs formerly considered unconsecrated ground. And when we compare this whole promise with others of a similar nature, uttered even at an earlier date, we find the element of universality very distinctly marked. Joel, for example, follows up a promise that the people shall know that the Lord is in the midst of Israel with another which says: "And it shall come to pass afterwards that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh . . . and it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered."[1] No language could state more explicitly that access into this sacred league was to be made possible to every creature under heaven.

Best of all, however, is the intimation that this New Covenant will be *final and everlasting*. The Sinaitic league was, on the face of it, only disciplinary and preparatory, dealing but with one people, and that with a view to a wider purpose. Hence it was a characteristic weakness in it that it could be broken, and that in such an event the Lord was at liberty to reject them in return. Since it is in the last resort a dispensation of sovereign grace by which the salvation of men is infallibly provided for, both as regards the fulfilment of conditions and the bestowal of blessings, the New Covenant could be marked by no such imperfection. Originating and directing it in its whole course, the Lord will also bring this project to a

[1] Joel ii. 28, 29.

victorious consummation. The whole course and constitution of the natural world is so guided by Him that its beneficent arrangements never fail. The triumphant progress of the administration of the New Covenant is as certain as any of these. This holy league shall continue to operate amongst men till the kingdom of grace penetrates the kingdom of nature, and both duly blended merge in the kingdom of glory.

On all these grounds, therefore, it was really a *New* Covenant that Jeremiah was honoured to announce. As compared with that which Israel first received, it was new in its conditions, new in its blessings, new in its range, new also in its career and duration. It was thus also the richest dispensation of God that had as yet been heard of under heaven.

About the period when this prediction of Jeremiah was fulfilled there can be little room for question. Amongst the Jews the opinion seems to have prevailed that, in this promise of sovereign mercy, it was not so much the Sinaitic Covenant itself that was regarded as defective as the faithfulness of the people. Its fulfilment would thus be referred to the restoration under Ezra. This, at least, is the position they take up in controversy with Christians now, as they seem to have done in the first days of the Gospel. But the words "New Covenant" imply that that which was first had not been found faultless. If that had been so, no place would have been sought for a second. "In that he saith 'a new covenant,' he hath made

the first old;" and being old, it will, of course, disappear.[1] Equally wide of the mark is it to say, with some ancient Christian interpreters, that this prediction can only be fulfilled in heaven, when the heart of man shall be thoroughly dominated by the will of God. The vital point of the question concerns the time when the Covenant was first actually bestowed on men. The words "in the last days" evidently refer to the period of the fulness of redemption on earth; and this being so, it becomes indisputable that the Covenant is regarded as to be presented and concluded in the Messianic era. That it will at once manifest its perfect fruits in the life of Israel and the world is nowhere said. Jeremiah speaks in the ideal language of prophecy, and so presents a picture which can only be gradually realised in fact. A day will dawn when even on earth this dispensation shall manifestly sway the life of the world. It will be seen in all the grandeur of its power in eternity. But here on earth must it take root; and no date for its establishment can be fixed but the ministry of Him who was to be at once Jehovah's servant and His appointed sacrifice.

This is clearly the view of the Lord Jesus Himself. As the Sinaitic Covenant was granted in the days of Moses, so was the New Covenant given by Jesus in the course of His own life and career on earth. This would suffice as a general statement of the fact. But the Master goes beyond this: He tells us the exact

[1] Heb. viii. 7–13.

period of its ratification. When He used the words, "This cup is the new covenant in my blood, even that which is poured out for you," He stood in full view of that death on Calvary to which He had been looking forward as the consummation of His ministry and His great end in coming into the world. It is to be the sacrifice of the New Covenant, and is to hold to it the very same relation that the blood of the sacrifice offered by Moses held to the First Covenant. In other words, the blood of Jesus is, in His own view, the root of the New Covenant, the ground on which it was to be established, and on which it was to stand ratified for ever.[1] Thus, as the Covenant was new in its conditions, blessings, range, and duration, so was it to be new also in the perfect and everlasting basis which the Lord provided for it.

This also is, of course, the view which we find developed in the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the other apostolic writings, with unwavering certitude of conviction, and yet greater fulness of detail. In His ministry as a whole, Jesus exercised the very same function betwixt God and man that Moses held; though He was a solitary Mediator, and personally of

[1] The form of expression here quoted is found in Luke and Paul. Matthew and Mark say: "This is my blood of the covenant." The meaning is essentially the same in both cases: only in the former the cup is more identified with the fulness of the blessing of the Covenant of which it is the symbol and channel. In the latter, the cup is regarded as pointing to the special form of the blessing, and the way in which it was purchased.

a higher grade, and had to deal with an infinitely better Covenant. But He had been appointed to act not only as Mediator but also as Surety—that is, He was commissioned to see that all the provisions of the Covenant, on the part of those who received it, were carried out. This involved the presentation of an adequate atonement for sin in their behalf, and, when the fitting time arrived, He Himself acted as Victim and Priest in one. In the case of a covenant that was simply preliminary and typical, the blood of bulls and of goats might suffice as the ground of ratification. And this it was that Moses poured out on the altar and sprinkled on the people. But in the case of a covenant of salvation that was to be real, ultimate and universal, no blood could suffice but that of the Lamb of God. Thus Jesus, through the eternal Spirit, offered Himself without spot unto God.[1] When He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven He carried with Him to the right hand of the Father—that is, to the mercy-seat of Jehovah—the blood of a sacrifice which could purge the conscience from dead works to serve the living God; or, in other words, "His living and glorified humanity, previously offered in sacrifice and accepted as the redemption of the world."[2] "For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true, but into heaven itself, now

[1] Heb. ix. 14.

[2] Steward, *The Argument of the Epistle to the Hebrews*, p. 312. (Clark.)

to appear in the presence of God for us."[1] Retaining the full merit and power of the sacrifice He offered once for all, Jesus is still in Himself an ever present and ever available propitiation for sin before God. The blood He offered is the blood of an everlasting Covenant; and, in virtue of it, He remains the great Shepherd of the flock of God.[2]

It is this great achievement, accordingly, that forms the chief theme of the Gospel. We preach Christ and Him crucified. Like the apostles in their first efforts in evangelisation, the heralds of Christ, in every age and every clime proclaim the offer of a holy league of God, that, formed in the first instance with His Son in behalf of others, was by Him both explained in His teaching, exemplified in His life, and confirmed in His blood. Ratified once for all by the sacrifice of the cross and the ascension into glory, this saving alliance is now to be shared in by all the world. It was in the first instance offered to Israel; but, having been blindly rejected by them, it is now thrown open to all the race.

The first great blessing which the Gospel Covenant presses on the acceptance of men, through the knowledge of the truth, is of course the forgiveness of sins: "Be it known unto you therefore, brethren, that through this man is proclaimed unto you the remission of sins: and by Him every one that believeth is justified from all things from which ye could not be

[1] Heb. ix. 24 (cf. Delitzsch, *in loc.*). [2] Heb. xiii. 20.

justified by the law of Moses." In the blood of the Lamb, sprinkled on the altar of God in heaven, every one that consents from the heart to be saved sees his own life restored to fellowship with a holy God, and all his sins blotted out as a thick cloud. But rich as this blessing is, it does not exhaust what the Gospel offers to us in the cross of Christ. Moses sprinkled with the blood, not only the altar, but the people themselves. And this last action, we saw, symbolised a blessing yet higher than the former. Is there anything corresponding to it in the New Covenant? Undoubtedly. For we read in the Epistle to the Hebrews of our hearts being sprinkled from an evil conscience and of our coming to Mount Zion and finding there the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel; just as also, in the First Epistle of Peter, we read of the children of God being "elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus."[1] Standing in the order and place which these utterances assign to it, the sprinkling of the blood of Christ cannot be held to carry in it nothing more than a new and deeper sense of forgiveness and reconciliation. This is doubtless always an accompaniment of it: but in itself the sprinkling is something more penetrative still. It is attained and enjoyed through the consecration of the Spirit, and must refer specially to the

[1] 1 Pet. i. 2.

soul's progress in holiness. This view is also the only one that is in harmony with the teaching of the earlier type. "For," to quote the words of an accomplished expositor of this department of sacred truth, "with what effect was the blood of atonement sprinkled upon the true worshippers of the Old Covenant? With the effect of making whatever sacredness, whatever virtue (symbolically), was in that blood, pass over upon them: the life, which in it had flowed in holy offering to God, was given to be theirs and to be by them laid out in all pure and faithful ministrations of righteousness. Such precisely is the effect of Christ's blood sprinkled on the soul; it is to have His life made our life, or to become one with Him in the stainless purity and perfection which expressed itself in His sacrifice of sweet-smelling savour to the Father. What a sublime and elevating thought! It is much, assuredly, for me to know that, by faith in His blood, the crimson guilt of my sins is blotted out, Heaven itself reconciled, and the way into the Holiest of all freely laid open for my approach. But it is much more still to know that by faith in the same blood, realised and experienced through the power of the Holy Spirit, I am made a partaker of its sanctifying virtue; the very holiness of the Holy One of Israel passes into me; His life-blood becomes in my soul the well-spring of a new and deathless existence."[1]

Put in other words, this simply means that, in the

[1] Fairbairn's *Typology*, vol. i. p. 223.

cross of His Son, the Father made provision not only for the expiation of the guilt of sin but also for the infliction of a fatal blow on its power within the heart. The same faith that takes the first blessing may also growingly receive the other. Sin is never in this life wholly extirpated even in a child of God; but, as he holds fast the beginning of his confidence, he is assured that the dominion of sin within him has got a mortal wound, that, deepened and developed by the finger of the indwelling Spirit leading him into fellowship with Christ, will at last enable him to stand faultless before the throne with exceeding joy. The blood of the cross, as the basis of the New Covenant, thus becomes a new and living way whereby we may enter into the fulness of the blessing of Christ. The believing soul is not only assured that, in the living Christ who once died for sin, his life is restored to fellowship with God, but is actually made partaker of the eternal life that is in Christ and that Christ Himself is. The life of the Son who passed through death for sin is now, through the cross and by the Spirit, as the direct Agent at work, communicated to the soul, and therewith grace for grace. Christ thus becomes our life, and when He is manifested we shall be manifested with Him in glory.

It is thus plain that entrance into the blessings of the New Covenant is a purely spiritual act on the part of the individual soul. The prevailing spirit of the earlier Covenant was, that they only who complied with

the whole circle of the outward conditions should get the blessing: "the man that doeth them shall live in them." But, as even the prophets foretold, it is faith that now under the Gospel takes the prey: "the just shall live by faith:"[1] "the Gospel is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth."[2] And this is a principle that governs the after progress as well as the beginning of the spiritual life. All the highest blessings of the New Covenant may be apprehended and enjoyed simply through the Word of God revealing Christ and received by faith. It is to be understood that this is the case even with communion with Christ in its fullest form. It was long before the Supper was instituted, and not merely in anticipation of it, that Jesus said to the Jews and His disciples, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, ye have no life in yourselves. . . . He that eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood abideth in me and I in him."[3] This most intimate fellowship with the Saviour comes to us by the Spirit, through the obedience of faith. We eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ first of all, when we receive for ourselves the atonement which was wrought out by His suffering life and obedience unto death. Yet this alone does not exhaust the meaning of the words. It is further implied that we receive the very life of Christ—that is, Christ crucified as our life—into our

[1] Habakkuk, ii. 4. [2] Rom. i. 16.
[3] John vi. 53-56.

hearts, and that in His strength we are enabled to subject our wills to the laws He submitted to, to enter into the victory over sin which He sinlessly achieved, and thus to reproduce, in our whole life and character and conduct, something of what Jesus Himself was, alike to God and man. Doing this day by day we abide in Him and He in us. We bear about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, and the life of Jesus is made manifest in our mortal body.[1]

To come now, however, to the point to which all our previous exposition must now converge, it may be here said, "If the word of God, received by faith, be thus a sufficient means of receiving all the grace that is in Christ Jesus, what room is left for any special value being attached to the Supper? What necessity was there for Jesus instituting the Supper, in addition to teaching by the Word the relation in which His death stood to the New Covenant? This question has been so far answered already in showing the way in which the Lord's Supper takes the place of the Passover; but the point is of such importance, alike for our estimate of the Supper and of the benefit we derive from it, that it must be explained more in detail. It was formerly stated that the Supper, as instituted and used by Jesus Himself, had a threefold reference to his career—to what He did on Calvary, to what He was to do in Heaven, and to what He is yet to do in His second coming. The exhibition of this connection in

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

itself was of great value, for it virtually repeated what He announced in the Gospel, and thus tended to establish confidence in the historic verity of the events that lie at the basis of the Christian faith. And this service the Lord's Supper does still for all that witness it and understand something of its meaning. To every one who contemplates it, it testifies with the Gospel that Jesus died a sacrificial death for sin, that now from heaven He is extending His reign in the hearts of men, and that He is to come again and fully satisfy the longings of His disciples with the riches of His glory. But it was also stated that the Supper thus takes rank as a new and special means of grace alongside such other ordinances as prayer and the Word. This brings us to the vital part of the question raised, namely, the conjoint action of the Word and the Supper in the case of those who have, through the Word, accepted Christ as a Saviour.

It goes a great way towards clearing up this point to say that, all-sufficient though Christ is as a Saviour, and efficient too though the Word be as the Divine instrument for presenting Him to the believing heart, our faith in Christ, like that of the first disciples, is nevertheless found to be both weak and wavering. And it is manifest that if there could be provided for us a means of grace, in addition to the Word, that would tend to strengthen our faith, even though it should assume a somewhat different or more external form, it would be of immense service to us in all our

Christian life and worship and activity. Now, it is just this benefit that the Supper was instituted and intended by the Lord Jesus to confer on His own immediate followers at first and on His disciples of every era since. It does not set before us anything about Christ different from what is given in the Word. It does not present anything more about Him than is found in the Word; it does not even present so much about Him as the Word does. But what it does join with the Word in presenting about Christ, it sets forth in a different fashion, and that too a fashion which is very striking and tender and winsome. What the Word presents in speech to the heart through the ear, the Supper presents to the heart through the eye, by the visible symbols of bread and wine. And as the heart is supposed to be in each case a believing heart the result is that, by the Supper too, the faith of the disciple may be greatly increased. To quote a sentence or two from the incomparable analysis of this part of the subject, given by a distinguished preacher three centuries ago, "Then I say we get no other thing in the Sacrament than we get in the Word. Content thee with this. But suppose it be so, yet the Sacrament is not superfluous. But wouldst thou understand what new thing thou gettest —what other thing thou gettest? I will tell thee. . . . I say, we get this new thing—we get Christ better than we did before; we get the thing that we got more fully, that is, with a surer apprehension than

we had of it before; we get a better grip of Christ now. For by the Sacrament my faith is nourished, the bounds of my soul are enlarged; and so, where I had but a little grip of Christ before, as it were betwixt my finger and my thumb, now I get him in my whole hand; and aye the more that my faith grows, the better grip I get of Christ Jesus."[1]

Nor, if further analysis be desirable, can it be very difficult to understand the particular way in which the Supper does increase the faith of those who participate in it. To the disciples who first sat down at the table with Jesus Himself, the Supper, as instituted by Him, could not be other than an additional and unmistakable proof of His determination to save men, of the reality of His promise to save, and thus also of the love that filled His whole soul at the time. When they remembered Him breaking the bread they were to eat, and handing round the cup they were to drink, saying at the same time that they represented His own body and outpoured blood, they could not but feel that He was desiring to assure them that men were to be saved at any cost, that He would yet fulfil His promise to them, and that He was doing all this in the strength of a love for them that would endure through all the ages. And this conviction, maintained in the repetition of the ordinance, could not but draw out their hearts to Him as living and reigning still, and so strengthen their trust in Him. This, however,

[1] Robert Bruce's *Sermons*, p. 49, 50 (Wodrow Edition).

is the very conviction we are to cherish still. When we see and partake of the bread broken and the wine poured out, with the same meaning publicly attached to the action, we are to put ourselves in the place of the first disciples celebrating the Supper after Jesus had left them. And doing this in remembrance of Him, as going forward to save us also, our hearts too are drawn out in trust and love. And when, in addition to establishing these facts about Christ's intention, we find the Supper also confirming to us what our own experience has taught concerning the nature of His salvation as a spiritual nourishing of the soul, and of its present accessibility as thrown open to us all in the living Christ still, what should prevent us regarding the Supper as really a personal token of the Lord's abiding interest in us at the very hour when we partake of it? And why should it not prove a powerful encouragement to our faith in Him?

It is this influence of the Supper on the growth of faith that entitles it to be called a seal of the New Covenant.[1] This term is applied in Scripture only to circumcision; but its transference to the Lord's Supper, as also to Baptism, can be easily justified. At bottom a seal is also a sign, that is, a visible token with a manifest reference to some fact. And the Supper, we have seen, is such a sign: for it is a visible token with a reference to the nutrient effects

[1] This aspect of the Supper is well explained in Professor Candlish's admirable Handbook on *The Sacraments*, pp. 27–31, 97–102. (Clark.)

which Christ crucified exercises on the believing soul. But a seal is more than a simple sign. It is a sign, with the additional element of personal attestation or security. The pictorial sign which men affix to documents, instead of or along with their own signature and generally with the spoken word, is a seal, because it is a personal attestation of the willingness to perform the conditions or fulfil the promises stated therein. So the Supper is a seal, because it is a personal token annexed to the word of the truth of the Gospel, concerning the new holy league of salvation which God now offers to men in His Son. The ring which a newly married husband puts on the finger of his spouse is, as used by him, a seal of appropriation to himself and of obligation to fulfil all the duties of the wedding covenant. And, in like manner, when the Lord Jesus puts into our hands the signs of the Supper—the bread and wine—He means them to be taken as a personal token—a personally attested pledge or seal that He takes us to Himself as His own, as we also take Him, and that He will bestow on us His forgiving love and sanctifying power, with all the riches of His grace that are stored up in the New Covenant.

To get at the whole secret of the value of this ordinance for the increase of faith, however, we have again to recall the fact that it is not only a seal of the grace which is in the once crucified Saviour, but also a channel or medium by which we do actually

get more of this grace through faith: that is to say, what the word promises and the Supper seals, the Spirit also through the Supper gives. When Jesus said, "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you; this is my blood of the new covenant," He referred to the spiritual food for the soul which was to be provided in His salvation. Hence it is this also that is the burden of the cardinal passage already quoted from the Epistle to the Corinthians: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a participation in the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a participation in the body of Christ?"[1] From this statement it is evident that the Lord is not content with giving in the Supper a personal token of His promise and power to save, but does actually make use of it for imparting salvation, alike in the form of assured forgiveness and growing liberation from the power of sin, through fellowship with Him in the sinless life which he victoriously carried through death. This indeed may be said to lie at the root of the Supper being capable of use as a seal at all. No man gives a token of friendship to another, unless by previous experience and actual communion each has been able to enjoy and prove the other's affection. A keepsake is the seal of well-tried tender regard; a marriage ring is the pledge of an affection which has already been deeply rooted. And so the Lord's Supper can be a seal only

[1] 1 Cor. x. 16.

to those who have already, in actual spiritual communion, tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious.

Here, then, we can now present in a brief summary all that the Lord's Supper is found to be in the reception of the New Covenant. It sets forth the way in which this Covenant was ratified by the blood of the Lamb of God; the idea of death, as we have already said, being indicated in the separation and juxtaposition of its two elements. It further represents in these symbols the blessings which the Covenant, thus ratified, was designed to convey, especially the nutritive power of forgiveness through the blood of atonement, and sanctification through the blood of sprinkling. It becomes also a channel by which faithful adherents of the Covenant are actually made partakers of these blessings. And it thus becomes a personal token of the friendship established by the Covenant, whereby we are confirmed in the possession and enjoyment of these blessings, and so become entitled to expect them onwards into eternity.

So far as exposition of the positive aspects of the truth we are now dealing with is concerned, we might here close this chapter. It so happens, however, that it is at this very point that there first comes into view what is perhaps the most delicate question we have to deal with in connection with this whole subject. And even at this stage it cannot be wholly ignored. Granted that the Supper, as an accompaniment of the word and a seal of the New Covenant, does

bring home to us more clearly and fully all the blessings purchased by the sacrifice of Christ, what is the precise relation of the elements of the Supper to this sacrifice? In what sense is it true that the wine of the Supper is Christ's blood of the New Covenant, or the New Covenant in His blood? Are the blessing and drinking of the cup, along with the breaking and eating of the bread, in any real sense a sacrifice of Christ or a repetition of His accomplished sacrifice, or a feast on that sacrifice, or simply a feast after that sacrifice?

It is in erroneous answers to these questions that all the false views of the Supper which have prevailed in Christendom have arisen. It is really a sacrifice, says the Church of Rome, because the bread is changed into the veritable body and blood of the Lord. It is a continuation of the sacrifice of Christ, says the high ritualist, because the glorified body of the Lord is present in the elements, and we offer it anew to God. It is a feast on a sacrifice, says the philosophic ritualist, because it represents the sacrifice of Christ and offers it anew in the elements to our acceptance. It is a feast after a sacrifice, says the latitudinarian Free Churchman, because Christ died for sin, and we now use the bread and wine simply as a form of worship and thanksgiving.

To those who understand the real character of the relation that exists betwixt the Old and New Covenants, it may seem superfluous to treat these

assertions seriously. A sufficient answer may seem to be found in the fact that, though the words of Jesus entitle us to regard the Supper as holding, under the New Covenant, a place in some degree analogous to the action of Moses with the blood and the feast that followed at the ratification of the Old Covenant, yet this analogy is not to be pressed into minute details. This is right. It is only for the broad truths it suggests concerning His own death, and the Supper He instituted, that this reference is introduced by Jesus here. In its relation to the New Covenant, the administration of the Supper has no analogy to the sprinkling of the blood on the altar by Moses. For that action foreshadowed the ratification of the Covenant as betwixt the Father and the Son, while the Supper is concerned only with the subsequent reception by the believing soul. The Lord's Supper presupposes the sacrifice of Christ as already consummated and deals simply with the communication of its virtue to those who, by the hearing of faith, have accepted the Covenant. It is therefore more closely allied to the sprinkling of the blood on the people and the feast that followed. Yet even as regards these parts of the ancient ceremonial, it is neither of them wholly or exclusively that the Supper represents and fulfils, but only the more general features of both together. Under the New Covenant, indeed, the two become actually merged in one another. It is the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus, as received by faith through the

Spirit, that furnishes the feast of the soul. And it is the communication of the imperishable virtue of the sacrifice, and not something before it or after it, that the Supper represents and becomes an actual channel for.[1]

Yet simple and sufficient as this explanation is, it may not meet the wants of all students of this subject. In the face of such diverse interpretations of the precise place and part of the Supper in the reception of the New Covenant, it becomes necessary to state the truth with the utmost precision. The whole question falls to be examined yet more carefully at a later stage. But, meanwhile, the following consecutive statements may perhaps be found useful in excluding preliminary objections and preparing the way for right views.

1. The Lord's Supper is in no sense a sacrifice in itself, nor does it become a sacrifice in the administration of its elements. It does not even represent the sacrifice of Christ as a process of suffering. It simply presupposes the death of Christ for sin, and by the separation of its two elements nobly enshrines it as an accomplished fact. It thus represents the death of Christ in the specific aspect of its forgiving, cleansing, and healing efficacy. The wine of the Supper is the

[1] It was by forgetting this that the older theologians, on the one hand, ran the risk of exhibiting the Lord's Supper as a sacrifice, and modern exegetes, on the other, fell into the mistake of identifying it with the feast on the peace-offering. The truth is, as we have stated, that it represents and reproduces both the sprinkling and the feast in their larger spiritual characteristics and connection.

blood of the New Covenant, or the New Covenant in the blood of Jesus, because it exhibits the death of Jesus as laying the foundation of that Covenant, and manifesting its power in the blessings the Covenant has to bestow.

2. Hence, too, the Lord's Supper is not a repetition or continuation of the sacrifice made at the ratification of the Gospel Covenant. It simply reminds us of that ratification which was effected on Calvary, once for all, on behalf of those who were given to Christ, and so gives to the believer a constantly recurring opportunity of having this and the whole saving wealth of the Covenant sealed by faith to himself as an individual soul. Israel received the Old Covenant once for all in the blood sprinkled on them by Moses. This had simply to be acquiesced in by the generations following. The disciples of Christ find in the Supper an occasion and a means of appropriating His blood of sprinkling continuously, and so also of being ever and anon personally and distinctly embraced anew in the permanent operation of the Covenant.

3. Then again: the Lord's Supper is not in itself a feast on a sacrifice, or a feast after a sacrifice. It only gives to the believer a special and formal opportunity of feasting by faith on the sacrifice of Christ and the blessings it brings: on Christ crucified, and the benefits He bestows. The elements of bread and wine are simply a fitting consecrated instrument and channel for receiving this spiritual feast, ordained by the grace of

God, and therefore helpful in the hands of faith for that end.

4. Hence, last of all, the participation of the Supper is not a mere act of worship. It is strictly an act in which, by faith, we receive the Crucified One, and the blessings He has to bestow. This is intended to give rise to worship, and may lift the soul into its highest exercises. For the Supper is the means of receiving a blessing for which thanksgiving and adoration are the only fitting return. But where Christ has not been first received by faith, and is not also received through the ordinance itself, no true worship of this kind can be offered. The Supper leads to worship only as it is first the occasion and medium of a spiritually satisfying feast. It is thus manifest that the visible material signs of bread and wine are not given to be handled as a mere aid to devotion. They are rightly used only when they are received as constituting one means of grace and a true aid to the faith by which this spiritual feeding on Christ is carried out.

With these explanations before us, we may now safely speak of the Lord's Supper simply as the feast of the New Covenant, and conclude this chapter by briefly indicating its entire superiority to the earlier communion festival, whose significance it has received and whose place it now continues to hold. As regards external surroundings, indeed, the former may be readily admitted to have had the advantage. To meet

on the slopes of the sacred mount in the presence of all the tribes, to sit beneath the footstool of the very throne of Jehovah with the light of His glorious presence falling on the uplifted eye, to eat and drink there, and to feel that they were dwelling in the secret place of the Most High and abiding under the shadow of the Almighty, was, to men who were ready to be impressed by the outward and visible, an occasion of honour they would never forget. In the upper room at Jerusalem, there was but a little timid flock, partaking of a simple repast, and cowering the while beneath the shelter of a Friend whose love and presence they were all dreading to lose. Yet, in view of the signal grace of Him who presided at this later feast, and the spiritual significance and power it soon came to wear, who shall hesitate to say that the lowly chamber in the city was irradiated with a glory greater than that which encompassed the nobles on the Mount? For there it was but a few representatives of the people that sat down to eat and drink: here every single soul who professes allegiance to Christ as the Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of the everlasting Covenant, is made welcome. To those who use it aright the Lord's Supper is also attended by a deeper peace and a higher vision. Formerly, it was considered much that the participants were left unharmed, and saw by the eye of sense an accompaniment of the Divine Presence. Now, every faithful disciple is invited to share in the peace of God that passeth all

understanding, and may hope, by faith, to see the King in His beauty and behold the land that is afar off. The later feast, too, may be often renewed. The First Covenant was ratified but once, and we read of but one feast. But the Lord's Supper may be celebrated as often as the disciples of the Church may consider needful for the renewal of their surrender to the Lord, and helpful to their spiritual life. The first festival belongs wholly to the past and, except so far as it has yielded its broader spiritual features to the Lord's Supper, has disappeared from earth for ever. The feast of the New Covenant will endure "till He come," and even then will give place only to the marriage supper of the Lamb, and the endless fellowship of those who follow Him whithersoever He goeth.

CHAPTER VI.

—o—

The Lord's Supper in the Apostolic Church.

At the close of the last Passover, Christ instituted that communion of the Supper which has come down through many generations—which goes forth unto all the world as the remembrance of His death and the pledge of the blessings it has purchased for us. How frail this little Ark which His hand has sent out on these stormy waters, but how safely it has carried its precious freight! Empires have risen and fallen, society been tossed in wild convulsion, and still it holds on its way, and will do; for Christ Himself is in it, with that heart of love which shall yet bless a whole sinful world.

John Ker, D.D.

CHAPTER VI.

THE LORD'S SUPPER IN THE APOSTOLIC CHURCH.

IF the view we have taken of the Lord's Supper, as gathering into itself and so reproducing in ultimate form the significance alike of the Passover and the ritual at the acceptance of the Old Covenant, be at all correct, we can have little reason to doubt that nothing even in the teaching of Jesus would take a deeper hold of the mind and heart of the disciples than the institution of this ordinance. No sooner would they begin to see the real character of the salvation He had achieved for them, than the signal way in which it was illustrated in the Supper would also flash upon their minds. And the natural result of this could only be that the disciples themselves should frequently unite in celebrating the Supper as Jesus had commanded them. With hearts filled with gratitude for the riches of His saving grace, they would find great delight in taking the cup of salvation, and calling on the name of the Lord. At this stage, accordingly, it will be fitting to take up, in chronological sequence, all the allusions to the ordinance which we find in their writings, in order

that we may ascertain from their testimony the place which it came to hold in their esteem, as well as the precise way in which it was celebrated, and so be prepared to gain a fuller insight into its real nature, and the special blessings it was intended to confer.

1. Pursuing this aim, we are at once confronted with the familiar passage concerning the meeting of the risen Lord with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. Jesus having, at their urgent invitation, tarried for a little in the village, "it came to pass when He had sat down with them to meat, He took the bread and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew Him; and He vanished out of their sight."[1] What are we to understand here by the "blessing and breaking of bread?" Does it refer to the solemnity of the Supper which Jesus had already instituted, or is it rightly interpreted in connection with an ordinary social meal? Amongst the first Christian commentators there seems to have been no doubt whatever that it was the former alone that was referred to. Viewing the whole statement of Luke in the light of the record of the Supper which he had just given, they assumed at once that it was the same rite that Jesus observed in this His first social meeting with any of His disciples; and that He thus showed how anxious He was that His followers should obey His own command, "Do this in remembrance of me." With their usual deference to the

[1] Luke xxiv. 30, 31.

opinions of antiquity, when these happen to suit their purposes, the Roman Catholic commentators favour this view, and, having on other grounds adopted the practice of distributing only the bread of the Supper to ordinary communicants, now seek to find in the phraseology here used a justification of their doctrine. But, in spite of the wavering of some Protestant expositors, it is now generally agreed that there is no reference whatever in this passage to the Lord's Supper. And when we look closely into all the circumstances of the incident, we find good grounds for the conclusion.

For one thing, it is no presumption in favour of the Supper having been celebrated here, that Jesus is said to have blessed and broken the bread, and distributed it to the others. For this He is said to have done at other times, when it is manifest that the sacrament was not dispensed. The same expressions are used, for example, in the account which this same evangelist gives of the feeding of the five thousand in the wilderness: "Then He took the five loaves and the two fishes, and looking up to heaven, He blessed them, and brake, and gave to the disciples."[1] Matthew uses essentially the same language in his account of the distributing to the four thousand.[2] The phrase, to "brake bread," had come down from the earliest days as a synonym for playing the part of host at a social meal. It was also a well-rooted custom among the Jews that, wherever three of them met at a repast, formal thanksgiving

[1] Luke ix. 16. [2] Matt. xvi. 36.

should be made. And resting as they probably did, not at the house of one or other of the disciples, but at a public inn of Emmaus, the two travellers would look on it as only fitting that Jesus, who had taken the lead in the conversation, should act as president on the occasion of their sitting down at meat. Moreover, it seems stamped on the face of the record that this blessing was made at the beginning of the meal, when they had just taken their places around the table, and not in the course of it, as would certainly have been the case, had it been specially connected with the administration of the Supper.

This view of the passage, as referring to an ordinary meal, is further confirmed by the original statement of the Lord respecting his future attitude towards the Supper. For after indicating the symbolic import of the elements used, He said—as if to indicate that the whole memorial was thereafter to be intrusted to their loving care alone—"But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." However capable this utterance may be of being applied to the continued spiritual presence and sympathy of Jesus with His disciples in the Supper, through all the coming age, its first and obvious reference is to the fact of His first participation of the Supper being also the last he should enjoy on earth. The visible presence of Jesus at His own table will be found only when He comes again in glory.

To these facts we have only to add the further consideration that, so far as appears, neither of these disciples[1] had been present at the first celebration of the Supper. For if even one of them had belonged to the circle of the twelve, it is very unlikely that his name would not have been mentioned in this interview, just as readily as in the case of Simon or Thomas. And it is impossible to believe that the Master would ever have dispensed the Supper to any disciples who had had no means of getting a real knowledge of its significance, and were otherwise quite unprepared for the solemnity. As to the possible objection that the fact of his becoming known to them in the breaking of bread shows a previous acquaintance with the Supper on their part,—an idea which is so much fostered by the application of this phrase in the language of the pulpit,—it has only to be said that this really implies nothing more than a previous acquaintance with Jesus Himself. It was evidently by the will of the Lord that the disciples did not recognise Him at the outset: for "their eyes were holden that they should not know Him;" and it was most probably by His suffering something in his voice, manner, or action, with which they had been previously familiar, to arrest their attention, that the veil was at length rent, and the presence of their beloved Master broke on their sight.

[1] Wieseler has suggested that these two might have been James the son of Alphæus, or Cleopas and his father. This would so far chime in with the statement in 1 Cor. xv. 7. But it is simply a hypothesis and nothing more.

2. The next passage in which expressions suggestive of the Lord's Supper occur, is that in which Luke describes the social life of the first Christian disciples in Jerusalem, after the day of Pentecost: "And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' teaching and in felowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. . . . And day by day continuing stedfastly with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread at home, they did take their food with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favour with all the people."[1] This statement of Luke has been much more generally applied to the Lord's Supper than that which occurs at the close of his Gospel. At first sight it seems not a little strange that this should be so. The language used in the former instance is much in accordance with the words of institution, while the notice here is the briefest possible. And doubtless it was this contrast which led fathers of the primitive Church like Chrysostom, and modern exegetes like Bengel,[2] to hold that instead of referring to any special ordinance of the Church, the historian is only setting forth here the simple and frugal nourishment of which these devoted followers of Jesus partook. On this ground some have also held that, if there is any allusion to the Supper at all in these verses, it can only be in ver. 42; just as others, again, hold that ver. 46 alone can be held to refer to the ordinance of

[1] Acts ii. 42-47.

[2] Bengel, however, seems to admit a covert allusion to the Supper.

the Lord. The Romish Church, as usual, admits a reference to the Supper, but, rejecting the plain historic origin of the phrase, tries to see here also some basis for their communion in one element alone. These, however, are exceptions to the general opinion of expositors; and, as the statement here made is in many respects a cardinal one, it will be well to look carefully into the way in which the reference to the Supper has come to be adopted.

The first point in favour of this view lies in the fact that it was only after Pentecost that the first disciples were really prepared to enter on the celebration of the Lord's Supper. During the days that elapsed immediately after the resurrection, it was doubtless often a subject of tender and devout meditation amongst them. It is highly probable that along with so many other "things pertaining to the kingdom," the whole ordinance formed the theme of fuller instruction at the times when the risen Master met with the Twelve.[1] If any doubts still lingered in their minds as to the propriety or necessity of using the two old symbols of the Paschal Feast in the new way indicated by the Lord, these would surely be stated by them, and solved by Jesus on the spot. Yet it was not until the day of Pentecost arrived, with its signal outpouring of the Spirit, that the disciples could come under any over-mastering impulse to begin the celebration of the ordinance amongst themselves.

[1] Acts i. 3.

For it was only in virtue of the ascension and the mission of the Comforter that Jesus truly became the bread of life to men. Before that era He was still, so far, as one apart from them. But when He, the Crucified, sent down the Spirit from on high, He Himself came as the Lord the Spirit to dwell in their hearts by faith, and so could be consciously appropriated as the food of their inmost soul. From the moment that their remembrance of Jesus became transfigured by the new sense of His living presence and friendship, the disciples could not but feel impelled to proceed to the use of the Supper.

It is also in favour of this reference that the celebration of the Supper had been made matter of positive injunction to the disciples. At a time and in the midst of circumstances they could never forget, Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me." As soon as the real nature of the spiritual relationship that was to subsist betwixt them and the Lord was clearly discerned, this precept was sure to come into their mind, and urge its own fulfilment on heart and conscience. This would be felt all the more strongly when, in response to their appeals, so many of the inhabitants of Jerusalem and other sojourners in the city, came and professed allegiance to the Lord Jesus. It was a clause of the last commission which Jesus had given to the Twelve that, as they made disciples, they should teach them all things whatsoever He had commanded them. And since the Supper was just one of these

special institutions, the apostles would feel bound to set it before their brethren with all convenient speed.

Besides, it is not to be forgotten that the first Christian disciples stood in need of all the strength and help from God they could possibly obtain. The duty of evangelising Jerusalem and all Judea and Samaria, then laid to their hand, was a task before which, if they faced it in their own strength, they could not but quail. It was only in the power of the Spirit that they could take it up at all. But the new influx of the Spirit had to be received and developed in the use of all the channels which Christ had appointed. And since, as we have seen, the Supper was strictly such a means of grace, and not a mere memorial service, the disciples must have been fain to embrace the opportunity of celebrating it on this account also. The more valuable they found it in actual experience, the more would they continue stedfastly in the observance of it as it was set before them by the apostles.

To these grounds we have but to add the obvious fact that this celebration of the Supper fell in well with the social meals which the disciples, gathered in Jerusalem at that time, were in various ways led to hold together. It was no new thing even in Palestine for adherents of the same religious party to meet together around a common table, and that too amongst the Jews as well as the Greek-speaking population of the northern province of the country. The Essenes,

for example, to whose social habits the life of the first Christians became, by the very similarity of their isolation, necessarily somewhat conformed, had long previously to that time been in the practice of holding a meal at which all of their sect were made welcome. At that very period, indeed, as Josephus reminds us, they were holding such gatherings by the shores of the Dead Sea. Yielding to the same instinct, then, the whole body of the disciples of Jesus also came together, probably at intervals and in detachments, to a common meal, which they partook of in their ordinary meeting-place, perhaps that same upper room in which they had been assembling for the ten days preceding the feast of Pentecost.[1] To many of them this would soon come to be their best home, where they could always be sure of receiving sympathy and hospitality and instruction. And it was doubtless while these meals were being thus shared that the apostles, imitating the action of Jesus in the midst of the Paschal Feast, dispensed to all their adherents what

[1] The suggestion has often been made that this room was the same as that in which Jesus and the Twelve partook of the Supper. Was it also the upper chamber over the gateway of "the house of Mary the mother of John, whose surname was Mark; where many were gathered together and were praying" at the time of Peter's imprisonment (Acts xii. 12)? As Rev. A. Wright (*The Composition of the Four Gospels*, p. 15) remarks, "The number of wealthy Christians at Jerusalem must always have been very small": and since from its having a porch and a portress this house evidently belonged to a family of means, it is not improbable that the use of it, given to the Master at first perhaps by Mark's father (Luke xxii. 11), was continued also to His disciples.

soon came to be known as the Lord's Supper. "Every evening after sundown, at the customary hour for the principal meal of a Jewish household, these brethren appear to have come together to a family table, very much as our Lord and the Twelve had done on the memorable night in which He was betrayed. It was the chief token and bond of their unity in their departed but still spiritually present Head and Householder. To make the bond tighter by more formally recalling its basis in His death, who sat no longer at the head of the board, they closed their meal by breaking bread as He had done and bade them do 'in remembrance' of Him."[1]

This, then, we take to be the meaning of the words in both of the verses now before us. "The breaking of bread" is not the Lord's Supper alone, but the whole meal of which it was only the most prominent accompaniment. The table was spread in the first instance to meet the needs of physical appetite; for even men full of the Holy Ghost require their daily bread. And such nourishment the disciples partook of with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God for His bountiful providence. But in the midst of all that was fitted to meet the wants of the body—and where the heart is in close fellowship with God, even a frugal meal becomes a rich feast—the desires of the soul were abundantly supplied. Very tenderly would the presiding apostles tell of the way in which the

[1] Dr. J. O. Dykes, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 107.

Lord Jesus, on the night in which He was betrayed, took bread and brake it, saying, "This is my body broken for you;" and likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many unto remission of sins." And with great love and power would they give witness to the truth that He who then died had risen again, to lead His flock by green pastures and still waters, till He should come again to receive them unto Himself. Thus mingling constantly in the public prayers of the temple, and breaking bread at home, they presented a bright picture of happy spiritual fellowship. So also would the whole Christian community be strengthened and prepared for all the work they had to do then, and for the yet wider mission that was soon to be opened up to them among all the nations of the earth.

3. Accordingly, it is to the observance of the Supper in one of the Gentile communities[1] that, following the historical order, we are now led. Among all the churches founded by the missionary zeal of the Apostle Paul, none grew more rapidly in numbers and influence than that of Corinth. Enriched by the Lord from the outset in everything that was needed for the advancement of the Gospel, so that they came behind in no gift, the disciples there had prosecuted the work of evangelisation with much success in the great commercial centre where their lot was cast. Yet it was

[1] 1 Cor. x. 14–22; xi. 23–34.

no easy task to expel the leaven of heathenism which had been so long and largely influencing the social life of the city, even from the hearts of true disciples. This is the experience of our modern missionaries; and Paul in his day felt the difficulty in its full force. Several of the most precious elements of the Christian profession, indeed, were speedily put in grave peril. Just as insects are seen fastening on the first fruits that ripen in the sun, so did the corruption of the human heart make itself manifest in connection with features of the social Christian life that were in themselves the most valuable and attractive. The Lord's Supper, in particular, was so much exposed to this danger that when, after hearing tidings of the internal condition of the Church at Corinth, Paul found it necessary to address a letter to them from Ephesus, for guidance and correction, he devoted several paragraphs to needful admonition on this topic.

To understand the abuse of this sacred ordinance, which became so flagrant, it is necessary to keep in mind the way in which it had come to be observed at Corinth. The social meal with which its celebration had been accompanied at Jerusalem at the birthday of the Christian Church was, after the lapse of a quarter of a century, still held in this connection. Looking back on that hallowed era, as representing a Christian community in its ideal condition, the disciples naturally wished to establish in every new centre of evangelistic work the same practices which had then been found

so beneficial. The common meal with the Lord's Supper in the course of it, or at the end of it, was one of these. And there can be no doubt that, rightly observed, it would have tended much to strengthen the feeling of brotherhood by which the disciples were otherwise desirous of being united. At Corinth, however, very speedily did it lose its primitive character. Among the Greeks this kind of entertainment was far from being unknown. In connection with their various political, commercial, and literary societies, the practice of holding a social banquet, to the provision for which all the guests contributed a share, had long prevailed. But there was a manifest tendency in them to assume a lower form than that in which they started. The chapter in Xenophon's *Memoirs of Socrates*, with which every classical student is familiar, shows that even then it had become a fashion at some of these gatherings for each intending guest to bring his own contribution to the banquet, and then sit down to eat it, apart from others, in the common meeting-places.[1] And it is plainly stamped on the face of Paul's allusion to the observance of the Supper among the Corinthians, that to this depth the celebration of the common meal had, within so short a period, already sunk. The Pentecostal table was simple and frugal. Each disciple brought to it all he could obtain, and gladly shared it with the poorest who could bring nothing. All was love, and peace, and concord. At Corinth, on

[1] Xen. *Mem.* iii. 14.

the contrary, the distinction of classes and tastes had already begun to assert itself. Attendance at the common table, where the Supper was dispensed, was kept up by many only for the sake of appearance. For those who were better off brought their own supper with them and ate it there apart from others, caring not though those who had no provisions to bring received no hospitality at all. Nay, more: even before the Lord's Supper was dispensed, or as some think in the midst of it, these guests both ate and drank to such an extent that they could be held guilty both of gluttony and drunkenness. A feast in which flagrant debauchery met alongside hunger and poverty was but a wretched occasion for the celebration of the holy ordinance, of which Jesus said, "Do this in remembrance of me."

In the production of such a saddening state of things as this, many deteriorating influences were doubtless at work. The tendency to sensual indulgence which, in centres of wealth and luxury like Corinth, had begun to affect all classes, helps to explain much of it. Not a little also may have been due to the desire, on the part of those who held a better position in society, to avoid coming into close contact with the many adherents of Christianity who had come from the lowest ranks of the inhabitants. It is conceivable also that the various parties which had arisen in the Church, and of the activity of which we are elsewhere informed, had begun to manifest

themselves in or about these meetings. But it seems beyond doubt that the leading part in causing this desecration must be assigned to the habits into which so many of the Corinthians had fallen through their idolatrous worship. Unlike the earliest inhabitants of Greece who, in the midst of their worship of the gods, contented themselves with a simple repast, and poured out a libation of wine on the altar, the Corinthians of Paul's days were accustomed to meet in the groves around the temples, and there hold a bacchanalian feast for the satisfaction of their own lusts. Such scenes of revelry every Christian disciple might have been expected to shun, that they might avoid the very appearance of evil. This was evidently the wish of Paul and his associates. But to this strict rule many of the Corinthians did not adhere. Whether from unwillingness to part with the pleasant follies of earlier days, or desire to retain the good opinion of former companions, or fear of incurring the contumely or persecution of those in authority who set their face against the preaching of the Cross, it is certain that large numbers of the Corinthian disciples did not hesitate to accept invitations to idolatrous feasts within the temple precincts, and partake freely both of the meat and the wine that were there provided. In the midst of such a practice, it was simply impossible that the observance of the Supper, at a common meal, could be preserved in its primitive simplicity and purity. Bringing to its celebration prejudices and misconcep-

tions like these, the Corinthians were sure to drag the sacred banquet down to their own level, and make it of the world worldly.

How then does Paul deal with this abuse? What admonitions does he apply to it, or what practical steps does he urge in connection with it?

As might have been expected, he directs the attention of the Corinthians in the first place to what he evidently regards as the principal source of the corruption that had set in—namely, their intercourse with idolaters. This is the subject of the central and apparently largest division of the whole epistle (chaps. viii.–xi. 1). The Corinthian elders had written to Paul asking his counsel about this matter, and here he answers their questions by discussing the subject in its various aspects. The antagonism to idolatry which should animate the spirit of every disciple, who was in the habit of partaking of the Lord's Supper, is indicated with great force in chap. x. 14–22. As beloved of God and himself, they were to fly from idolatry. He could appeal to their own conscientious judgment in the matter. Was contact or sympathy with idolatrous practices compatible with the Christian privileges they enjoyed? The cup of blessing which they blessed, was it not fellowship in the blood of Christ? The bread which they broke, was it not fellowship in the body of Christ? And thus identified with Christ and with all who, as partaking of His spiritual life, were equally united to him and to one another, and showing as they

thus did a spirit that was utterly opposed to all that was of the world and not of God, how could they suffer themselves to be identified with what was really a worship of demons? A feast partaken of in the spirit of devotion bound up the worshipper in the bundle of life with the object worshipped: were they not afraid of bringing down upon their heads the indignation of the righteous Lord?

But now having thus separated the practice of the Church from that of the world, the apostle must needs also deal with the faults in the service of the Church itself. And this he does in the next section of the epistle, which is devoted to the abuses of church meetings. Coming to the Lord's Supper (chap. xi. 17–34), he indicates at once his sorrow for the spiritual loss they were incurring by the profane way in which they had been observing it. If, as regards their general adherence to the main prescriptions on matters of worship and organisation, he felt free to give them a measure of commendation, from the way in which many of them were treating the Lord's Supper this praise must be withheld. They were meeting together on such occasions, not for spiritual progress, but for backsliding and temptation. When they could assemble as brethren and yet manifest divisions amongst themselves; when they could appear as at a common repast and yet consume each his own viands, beyond the bounds of love and decency and self-restraint; it could not be said that the Supper was any

longer to them a true memorial of Christ or a real means of grace to the soul.

If they would see the spirit in which the Lord's Supper should be observed, let them first recall the familiar but pregnant terms in which it was at first instituted by the Lord. He himself could never think of them without feelings of the deepest solemnity. For what he had taught at Corinth he, as a true apostle, had received by revelation directly from the Lord. This sacred ordinance, he had told them, was instituted by Christ on the night in which He was betrayed—a circumstance this, which showed how full of disinterested love to men His heart at that time was, and how careful men should be to show themselves loyal to Him in return. The Supper itself consisted but of bread and wine—symbols of His sacrificial death and present power to save, as Mediator of the New Covenant. They should remember that every time they partook of the Supper they really proclaimed the death of Christ and professed to glory in it, as the only way in which they could be separated from the love of the world and all the evil that was in it.

But if this were not enough to solemnise them, they ought to know that such desecration of the Supper as they had been practising, was not a matter of indifference to the Lord. In His sight those who treated the consecrated symbols of His body and blood, as mere common bread and wine, were guilty of a heinous sin. They were showing flagrant disrespect

to the memory and the presence of the Lord of glory; and every one who persisted in this exposed himself to chastisement at His hands. This indeed was the true explanation of the physical disease and mortal sickness with which many of them had been already overtaken. So swiftly and surely did suffering follow this heedless participation in a holy ordinance, that he who ate and drank in it without a real appreciation of its meaning and a true desire to meet with Christ, was really eating and drinking chastisement to himself.

The leading spiritual direction he had to give them, therefore, was to look into their hearts and lives to see if they saw there that trustful surrender to Christ which could alone warrant them to enter into communion with the Church, and the continued existence of which was the only condition on which they could hope to profit by the ordinance in the course of their Christian life: "But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup." If any additional practical direction could be of any service to them, it would be the suggestion that those who had to satisfy the demands of keen physical appetite should do so first at home, ere they came to the Supper. By these means they might hope to put an end to the present jealousy and confusion. And if any matter yet remained to be rectified, this could be set in order when he himself was upon the spot. So Paul dealt with the Lord's Supper at Corinth.

4. In the course of the missionary tour on which

he entered after leaving Ephesus, Paul came to Troas in Asia Minor. It is in the brief record of his sojourn there that the next allusion to the Lord's Supper occurs: "And upon the first day of the week, when we were gathered together *to break bread*, Paul discoursed with them, intending to depart on the morrow."[1] After what has already been said on the meaning of the phrase, it is needless to show at any length that the reference here also is really to the ordinance of Christ. As in a former chapter of the Book of Acts,[2] breaking bread is applied to an observance connected with other acts of religious service; and this of itself shows that it was not a mere meal for the satisfaction of physical needs, but a repast which was associated with the celebration of the Supper. This plainly the disciples at Troas were accustomed to engage in on the first day of every week. Already, under the sanction of the apostolic founder of this Church, this day had come to be observed as the Christian day of rest and worship. And it was felt to be only in harmony with the spirit of the Pentecostal community, as well as their own desires, to associate with the evening of that day—"the Lord's Day," as it was soon afterwards called—the observance of the Lord's Supper. In this respect, doubtless, Troas only furnishes an instance of what was already common in all the other churches around Ephesus, in Galatia, and at Corinth.

[1] Acts xx. 7. [2] Acts ii. 42, 46.

5. For the next allusions to the Supper we have to come down to the following decade of the apostolic age. These, if we may take what seem to be on the whole the best authenticated readings of the original text, are found in the Second Epistle of Peter and the Epistle of Jude. In accordance with the well-known relation betwixt these two Scriptures, the notices are in very much the same terms: "Men that count it pleasure to revel in the day-time; spots and blemishes; revelling in their love-feasts while they feast with you."[1] "These are they who are hidden rocks in your love-feasts, while they feast with you."[2] Here are the first and only passages in the New Testament where the social meal in connection with the Supper gets the name of Agapē, which afterwards became so generally applied to it. The origin of the term is not hard to tell. No injunction was more solemnly or more frequently laid on the disciples around the Supper table than that of loving one another. One great end served by the continued observance of a social repast was, that it gave the Christian disciples of each locality an opportunity of cultivating fellowship in a familiar way, not only with one another but with all visitors from other localities who might stand in need of their hospitality. But already teachers of error in word and deed had begun to pervert such occasions to their own base purposes. And Peter and Jude, ere they left the Church on earth, felt bound to warn their

[1] 2 Pet. ii. 13. [2] Jude 12.

friends and followers of the necessity of maintaining the utmost watchfulness against these seducers. Happily this danger was not yet universal. So late as the next century, as we learn from the glowing defence of Tertullian, there were churches in which the primitive feast was still maintained in all purity.[1] Yet at length flagrant abuses did manifest themselves; and, to put an end to all risk of the infection spreading, the love-feast was, by an early council of the church separated from the Supper, and afterwards laid aside as never really essential to the administration of it, and no longer required by the needs of the Christian community.

In addition to these commonly accepted allusions to the Supper, there are three other passages in which a few expositors have professed to find it noticed, namely, the exhortation to keep the feast in an early chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians,[2] the record of the meal on board the ship at sea, presided over by Paul, as found in the Book of the Acts,[3] and the statement in the Epistle to the Hebrews about Christians having an altar whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.[4] It is now generally agreed, however, that in none of these passages can a reference to the Supper be sustained on adequate grounds. The "keeping of the feast" in Paul's letter refers neither to the Jewish Passover, nor the

[1] *Liber Apologeticus*, chap. xxxix., Woodham's ed. p. 135.
[2] 1 Cor. v. 8. [3] Acts xxvii. 35. [4] Heb. xiii. 10.

Christian Supper, nor indeed to any one observance whatever, but only to the whole spirit of the Christian life as at once joyful and pure: literally it is, "let us keep festival." Any celebration of the Supper by Paul, in the midst of the storm at sea, is not to be thought of. All that Paul then did, or could in the circumstances dream of doing, was, in a full and formal way, to give thanks to God as the Preserver of all, and by his own example of breaking and eating bread to encourage his fellow-voyagers to do the same. He would show them how, even on the raging deep, a servant of Christ could do whatsoever He did, in eating or drinking, to the glory of God. In his letter to the Hebrews, the writer, though he uses a word for "altar" that has elsewhere [1] been interchanged with "table," is manifestly referring to the full provision of grace, "the fulness of the blessing of Christ," of which, unlike the adherents of Judaism, all Christian disciples could partake in fellowship with God—a provision that, rightly understood and enjoyed, should help to detach them from any overweening estimate of the old rites they had abandoned.

And now, with this review of the observance of the Supper in the apostolic church before us, what shall we set down as the main lessons it suggests as to the way in which it is to be regarded and treated by Christian disciples still?

1. In the first place, we think, it is here set beyond

[1] Mal. i. 7, 12 (LXX.).

doubt that the Lord's Supper is intended to be a permanent ordinance of the Christian Church. This feature of the Supper has been called in question only by those who have been led to regard the Christian Dispensation as entirely spiritual in the worship and service it enjoins: in our day chiefly by the Society of Friends. The contrast betwixt the Old and the New Covenants, they hold, lies in the fact that while the former was built up on the observance of external rites and ceremonies, the latter is a dispensation of the Spirit alone, inculcating a form of service that calls into exercise only the faculties of man's inner life. Whatever, therefore, Jesus may have done in condescension to the needs of His disciples on the night in which He was betrayed, He could not intend this general character of the Kingdom over which He presides to be marred by the celebration of any rite analogous to those that prevailed under the sway of Judaism.

In answer to this objection we have, first of all, to point to the representative character of the disciples at the first Supper. They were there, not as followers of Jesus in His earthly ministry only, but as members and ministers of His Church, that great community which was to last through all the ages and overspread the world. When He said to them, "Do this in remembrance of me," Jesus indicated no temporary observance of the Supper. He marked no interval within which it might be celebrated, and then fall into

disuse. Like His other commands at this time this injunction was to hold for all the days, even unto the end of the world.

Nor, when rightly viewed, is the celebration of the Supper any deviation from the spirituality of the New Covenant. So long as men are creatures of flesh and blood they must be content to have their spiritual life promoted in connection with outward forms. The body itself needs to be redeemed as well as the soul. According to the profound maxim of the German theologian, "Corporeality is the end of the ways of God." Even in the liberty of the glory of the children of God, what is outward in our nature will find place, though in forms transfigured by the Spirit of God. In the spiritual use of bread and wine, as symbols of the once crucified but now glorified Saviour, we are only taught, amongst other lessons, to see a pledge of the full salvation that awaits our whole nature when Jesus comes again.

If anything were wanting to confirm this conviction, it is surely furnished in the fact that this was the view of the apostles of the early Churches. The circumstance of the Supper being observed at all at Corinth and Troas amounts to a demonstration that this was the aspect in which they regarded it. For there, no less than a quarter of a century from the night on which Jesus was betrayed, it is still observed. And so far from there being any hint given of its coming desuetude, Paul's letter speaks of its being maintained

till the very return of Christ: "For as oft as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." To have given up the Supper, therefore, would have meant the abandonment of a very beautiful and effective embodiment of the great facts of the Gospel, as well as of a rich means of grace and a powerful instrument in the evangelisation of the world. On these grounds the Church of every age feels warranted in cleaving to "the breaking of bread," with all the fervour of the Pentecostal disciples if possible, and certainly with no less tenacity of purpose.

2. With equal emphasis are we here also taught the lesson that the Lord's Supper is to be retained in all the fulness of its use and meaning for one and all of the members of the Church. After the example of the apostles, the preaching presbyters of the Church administer the Supper to all disciples who are entitled to take part in it. But they do this only as the servants of the Church, and not as occupying any higher platform at the Table. The Supper was, from the beginning, the same channel of blessing to the humblest disciple present as to the most distinguished office-bearer. Not till the Roman Church began to alter the character of the ordinance, therefore, do we hear of only one of the elements—that is, the bread alone—being given to the people, while both were reserved for the use of the officiating minister or priest. This is a result of their doctrine of Transubstantiation, yet to be noticed, and one that is in itself quite as

deleterious as the source whence it sprang. It is true that some of the later apologists of the Romish theory of the Church have attempted to justify their practice on the ground of the high reverence that is due to the consecrated wine, and to the extreme danger that the ordinary communicant might feel the risk of incurring in the use of it at the Supper.[1] Such a feeling is, on any view of it, mere superstition; and so far from holding it worthy of encouragement, by the withdrawal of the cup, should a professedly earnest Church have been, that her ministers should at once have abjured the doctrine in connection with which alone it could have originated, and demanded for the people, as for themselves, the full use of the ordinance as it had been at first instituted by the Lord of all. In spite of the manifest tendency to use wine to excess at Corinth, Paul never dreamt of recommending the withholding of the cup; and the Church should act on the same principle still. The symptoms of a favourable attitude towards such a shrinking from the joyful and trustful reception of the elements of the whole Supper, which some members of the Anglican Church have been bold enough to encourage, ought to be condemned without delay. The excessive reluctance to confess Christ at His table, on which some Presbyterians have been known to pride themselves, is practically a manifestation of the same spirit, and hardly less worthy of repudiation.

3. To these two lessons we have only to add as

[1] Cf. Möhler, *Symbolik*, ss. 319-320. Regensburg, 1882.

a third that, according to the apostolic teaching and example, the Lord's Supper is to be retained in all its simplicity. As instituted by Jesus, it was the family feast of God's children. The circumstances in which it was first celebrated were all fitted to suggest and impart the feeling of spiritual home-fellowship. The Lord Jesus was there as Master, and all the rest were brethren, members of the same household and children of the same Father. The Pentecostal observance of the Supper carefully reproduced the original platform on which all were to meet. And so must it be to the end. Only to make sure of this, the dispensation of the ordinance itself must also be kept strictly within the lines laid down by Christ. On the table there must be both bread and wine. These are to be separated to a sacred use by prayer and thanksgiving to God. The bread is to be broken, and so divided; the cup is to be drunk, and passed round; and this is to be done in the name of Jesus, for the glory of God, and the edification of His people. But beyond this the Church has no right to go. Whatsoever is more than this savours of human invention and not of Divine ordinance. And, as the history of the early Church so fully shows, the intrusion of self-will into this sacred province is but the beginning of a desecration that soon overspreads the whole worship of God's house, puts an arrest on all true evangelical service, and sinks the professing kingdom of Christ to the level of a world lying in the wicked one.

CHAPTER VII.

—o—

The Real Nature of the Lord's Supper.

Look at High Mass, as celebrated in a Roman Catholic cathedral—the mitred bishop robed in richest embroidered silks, the varied yet still gorgeous dresses of the priesthood marshalled round him, the evolutions without end, the marchings, the bowings, the crossings, the chantings, the dumb yet brilliant show all going on within the railed enclosure, without one thing addressed, except through the eye, to the multitude without,—look and wonder that ever such a vast ornate superstructure could have been raised upon that incident which occurred eighteen hundred years ago in an upper chamber at Jerusalem.

W. Hanna, D.D.

CHAPTER VII.

THE REAL NATURE OF THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WERE the historical exposition of the celebration of the Supper just given fully and unanimously understood, the further elucidation of it would be comparatively easy. All that would be necessary might be stated under the illustration of the special purposes it was designed to serve. But, unhappily, this general consent does not exist. As one has plainly enough put it, "The Church has remembered her Lord, and obeyed His commandment of love, as members of families sometimes remember a deceased parent; casting angry glances at each other across his grave, and retiring to the house, whose head they have buried, to squabble about the meaning of his will." [1] It is just at this stage, indeed, that the wide divergence of opinion which prevails concerning the real nature of the Supper comes into view. And though we are here more concerned with the teaching of the New Testament on the subject than the history of ecclesiastical controversy, yet, as this turns very largely on

[1] Bruce, *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 370 (note).

the interpretation of Scripture, it will be helpful at this point to review several topics of discussion, in order that the whole Biblical teaching on the subject may be opened up, and the true character of the ordinance cleared. Even though this course may lead to the appearance of repetition, it will bring into full relief certain aspects of truth, which cannot but be helpful in protecting the inquirer against current error.[1]

1. Approaching the discussion in this spirit we are at once met with the question, What does the Lord's Supper, by means of these two elements of bread and wine, set forth?

A brief answer will suffice. Some suppose that they escape all risk of mistake by simply holding that the Supper is only a symbolic representation of certain great truths embodied in the central facts of Christianity. This is openly declared to be the faith of many of the modern Free Churches in England. It has, at least, been frequently advocated by some of their most prominent theologians. Writing of *The Ordinances of Jesus*, a preacher of our day, who seems to have not a few followers, says: "There is the faith of the Free Churches generally, in which they are held to be Divine in their origin, obligatory in perpetuity, monumental in significance and spiritually quickening

[1] We have followed our own method here; but the student of this discussion, who wishes a yet more detailed examination of these questions, may be referred to Ebrard: *Das Dogma vom Heiligen Abendmahl u. seine Geschichte*, vol. i. ss. 214–231. Frankfurt, 1845.

through faith and love. Broadly speaking, we hold that Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not "Sacraments" in the ecclesiastical sense, *i.e.*, they are not mysteries or miracles, not causes of grace, not in themselves vehicles of grace. "This is my body," means the same as the sayings, "The Lord God is a sun and a shield," "I am the bread of life," "I am the vine," "Ye are the body of Christ and members in particular."[1] With the first part of this statement we should have no difficulty in agreeing. But in the second, there is nothing short of an evacuation of the real meaning of the words of Christ. And the result is quite in keeping with the superficial view it sets forth. The whole ordinance becomes very much a mere expression of the inner life of the Christian people, and an opportunity to believers of worship and fellowship with one another. In the rebound from the manifest errors of Romanism and Ritualism, Protestantism here takes up a position that is in itself alike weak and indefensible. For in no sense is this a new view. It is, indeed, only an approach to what was held by Socinus and his followers long ago, and is held by Unitarians still. But it is none the less a very imperfect explanation of the teaching of Jesus and His disciples on the Supper. Very specially does it come short of giving due prominence to the close connection betwixt the symbols and the living Lord who distributes them. Of the bread Jesus says, "This

[1] *The Ordinances of Jesus*, by Dr. J. Clifford, p. 4.

is my body;" Of the wine, "This is my blood:" and he adds, "Do this in remembrance of me." Utterances like these bear on the face of them that, to the mind of Jesus, His Holy supper was far more than a sensible representation of a figure of speech. In His hands the elements were not so much symbols of evangelical truths as of Himself as the Truth then imparted to men. What the bread and wine symbolically set forth is the personal Christ; and while they represent Him they also do, in fact, present and offer the grace that is in Him to the eye and hand of faith, as the spiritual nourishment of the soul. Hence the Supper is not to be celebrated merely "as a token of faith in the Saviour, and of brotherly love."[1] As one of the most eminent Congregationalists of the century has said, "There ought to be no difficulty in understanding that, though the material elements are only symbols, the act of Christ, when he places these elements in our hands, is a spiritual reality. A key, to use Turretine's illustration, which has done good service in this controversy, is a very natural symbol of possession; but when the commander of a city hands the keys of the gates to the general of a besieging army, he does something more than perform a mere 'didactic' ceremony: by the surrender of the visible symbol he surrenders the city itself. . . . It represents a real transfer of power. And so when Christ gives us bread, and says, 'This is my body,' is it not a mere dramatic ceremony, deriving

[1] *Declaration of Congregational Churches.* 1833.

all its worth from its 'didactic' meaning, or its impressive power. His body is actually given. 'The bread which we break,' is 'the communion of the body of Christ.' 'The cup of blessing which we bless, is the communion of the blood of Christ.'"[1]

2. But now, this being so, we are led to ask, on the other hand, Under what aspects does the Supper set forth Christ?

In the first place, we must reply, it presents Him as the Crucified One. It was on the eve of His death that Jesus instituted the Supper, and it is of His death that it speaks. "This is my blood of the new covenant," said the Lord, "poured out for many for the remission of sins." This utterance has reference to the sacrificial outpouring of His life in expiation of sin. And so, writes Paul, "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." Such proclamation of the death of Christ could take place only because this death is exhibited in the elements of the Supper itself.

But how is this done? Many have always been ready to suppose, and even to teach, that this announcement is effected by the ministerial actions with the elements. When Jesus said, "This is my body broken for you"[2] He is regarded by many as setting forth the kind of death He was to undergo in being broken on the cross. It is not so. And the reasons

[1] Dr. R. W. Dale in *Ecclesia: Essays on Church Problems*, pp. 386, 387.
[2] 1 Cor. xi. 24. But on this reading, see Appendix.

are not far to seek. For one thing, it was evidently not the intention of Jesus to set forth His death by these symbols, as so much suffering endured. That was one feature, amongst others, in the design of the Passover; and hence there was the perpetual sacrifice of the paschal lamb. But after His death had been accomplished, the Lord preferred that, while it should be constantly preached as a real offering for sins, it should rather be presented in the Supper, with special emphasis, not on the manner of the offering itself, but on the spiritual effects it would work out in the soul that duly received Him. Bread and wine are universally recognised as fitted to promote the growth and sustenance of the body; and the Lord wished by these symbols to teach His followers the nutritive effects which He, as the crucified, would exercise on the inner life of believers. The actual form of the death of Jesus is, for the most part, presupposed as taught and known; and in the Supper it is to be chiefly shown what the Cross does in those who accept the grace it brings.

Quite in accordance with this view is the fact that, rightly regarded, there is nothing in the actions with the elements that really point to the manner of the death of Christ. There was no outpouring of the wine to set forth the shedding of Christ's blood on the cross; and so there is no breaking of bread to set forth the death of the body. It is true that, in one of the Evangelists, the action is followed up by the

words, "This is my body given for you (in your behalf)."[1] Yet this does not warrant us in holding that the breaking was intended to set forth the manner of the giving on the cross. In point of fact, the body of Jesus was not broken in crucifixion. For this there was an express reason. Not a bone of the paschal lamb was ever broken; and so Christ's death was effected without any portion of His body being broken, in order that the sacrifice might be presented in its entirety. The Lord Jesus died by a voluntary surrender of His human spirit into the hands of the Father. It was only after He had so died that even His side was pierced. And since, therefore, no action could be less appropriate for setting forth the manner of His death, it only remains that the breaking of bread is performed only with a view to its being shown that it is to be shared amongst all the guests at the table. The bread or loaf is one to begin with: it is broken that, in the one bread, all present at the Supper may participate.[2]

None the less distinctly, however, as we have already indicated, is the event of the death of Jesus enshrined in the form of the Supper. If not represented in the manner of its fulfilment, it is certainly

[1] Luke xxii. 19. On the reading, see Appendix.

[2] Principal Edwards (*The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, pp. 256, 292) is one of those who, retaining the reading, "*broken* for you," also cleave to the old reference to the crucifixion. On the above grounds, this view seems to us indefensible. If it were right, then the minister at the communion table might not only break the bread but also pour out the wine into the chalice: a feature which has never been accepted by Protestant churches as at all essential. See further, in Appendix iv.

set forth as having been accomplished. For this is shown, and that sufficiently, in the simple fact that there is not one element in the Supper, but two elements, presented in a state of separateness, and yet placed alongside each other. If the bread stands for the body of Jesus and the wine stands for His blood, then, when the two are kept together and given apart, the conclusion is inevitable that they are the symbols of One whose soul and body were separated by death. Not more explicitly did the lifeless body of Jesus, hanging on the tree, tell that He had commended His spirit into the hands of the Father, than the bread and wine speak of His having died. From the table of the Lord, as from the cross, the ear of man may still catch the victorious shout, "It is finished."

"'Tis finished,' cried our dying Lord:
Then sank His sacred head
Upon His breast: the spotless soul
Up to His Father sped.
"'Tis finished,' still these symbols say:
The separate bread and wine
Proclaim Him victor over death,
And tell He still is mine."

Here it is accordingly that we are able to come to a right understanding of the terms used in the statements of the Lord on the reference of the elements of the Supper: "This is my body," "This is my blood." Granted that the bread and wine as separately presented do, in an unmistakable way, symbolise the death of Jesus, it still remains to settle what special aspects of the sacrifice thus offered are set forth in

the terms "body" and "blood." The mistake most commonly made is, of course, that of putting a too exclusively physical meaning on these words, as designating parts of the sacrifice of Christ. "Body" is too frequently regarded as quite equivalent to the bodily frame of Jesus; while "blood" is thus readily taken to denote the blood that flowed in his veins. It is not so. By the former cannot be meant only the physical frame which was nailed to the tree; nor by the latter only the blood which flowed from the Saviour's side when it was pierced by the lance. No: these terms themselves are also figurative: they are both instances of that turn of speech in which a part is put for the whole, or that which contains for that which is contained. What Ratramnus, the first great defender of the faith on this question, said of the elements of the Supper, holds no less true of the elements of the sacrifice: "Of a truth it is the body of Christ, yet not His corporeal but His spiritual body; it is the blood of Christ, yet not His corporeal but His spiritual blood. Nought, then, is to be understood here corporally, but all spiritually. It is the body of Christ, yet not corporally; it is the blood of Christ, yet not corporally."[1] "Body" really includes Jesus' whole life in the flesh, as presented to God in our behalf; "blood" indicates more particularly the offering up of His soul to God on the cross under the

[1] "The Book of Ratramnus," § lx., appended to Rev. J. Taylor's *The True Doctrine of the Holy Eucharist.*

curse of sin. Rightly regarded, these two terms set forth the two sides—the one the more external, the other the more internal, of the one great spiritual sacrifice for sin Jesus was offering up throughout His whole life on earth, finished at last on Calvary; and now, so far as its whole merit and power is concerned, still retains in Himself at God's right hand as the Lamb that once was slain. Practically, they thus come to denote the new legal standing in relation to sin's guilt, and the holy spiritual life and nature in relation to sin's power, which Jesus won through the cross and, as the Crucified, still keeps on the throne for the salvation of a perishing world, and the nutriment of His believing people. This second aspect of the atoning work of Christ has much need to be emphasised in our day. For, as an able expositor of the sacrificial language of the New Testament has truly said, "The tendency to fix the mind exclusively on the commemoration of Christ's *death*, and to shut out the thought of His past *life* on earth and present *life* in heaven, impairs to many minds the force of our sacramental symbolism. We do not, in consequence, realise sufficiently in the outpoured wine the life which was poured out for us on earth in that prolonged mystery of suffering, and the life of the risen Christ in heaven, which is now, as we drink the sacramental cup, received into us as an inward spiritual life. By identifying the cup with the material blood which was shed upon the cross, we degrade the living sacrifice of

a living Saviour into the likeness of the dead victims, whose blood was poured out at the bottom of the Levitical altar, and which could, after all, only typify most imperfectly the ideal sin-offering." [1]

From this it follows that there is also in the Supper, as now dispensed to the followers of Jesus, a distinct reference, not only to His death, but also to His resurrection and exaltation. As another able student of the witness of the sacraments has observed, "The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is absolutely unintelligible without faith in a risen Saviour. . . The rite was not a memorial of death simply, but of death conquered by life." [2] When Jesus was seated with His followers around the table, it was largely by anticipation only that He could say of the bread, "Take, eat; this is my body which is for you;" and of the wine, "Drink ye all of it"—and that simply because he had yet actually to die for sin and appear in the presence of the Father. But now that He is alike risen and ascended, and, more than this, has sent down His Holy Spirit to work more intensely as the Spirit of adoption in the hearts of men, He is in a position to use these words as expressive of His present dealings with His believing people. For, like one who has succeeded to his inheritance, and is at liberty to expend it as he will, Jesus, now perfected as the Leader of salvation, is as

[1] F. Rendall, *Theology of the Hebrew Christians*, p. 127 (Macmillan).

[2] Dr. B. F. Westcott, *The Gospel of the Resurrection*, p. 128 (Macmillan). Cf. Martensen, *Die Christliche Dogmatik*, § 260 (p. 433, Clark).

free as He is able to give Himself to men. While, therefore, He continues to furnish the substance of the Supper, He is still the living and abiding President of it. What in His hands, as He first partook of it in the midst of the Paschal Feast, symbolised the cup of sorrow He had to quaff to the dregs on Calvary, now wears manifestly its true character as a cup of victory and of blessing, which He still gives to us, and which we are to drink to His glory as the once crucified, but now triumphant King. In this way, the Supper becomes, not merely a mirror in which the present gracious dominion of Christ is reflected, but also a royal feast at which we are actually under His benign sway. As the Puritans of an earlier day loved to figure it, the Lord Jesus looketh in upon us at the windows of the ordinance: "He showeth Himself—He glances through the lattice." [1] Our eyes of faith see the King in his beauty, and behold in the distance the land of glory in which we shall reign with Him when He comes again: and our hearts feel yet more deeply the tender power of the words so often sung—

"Here, O my Lord, I see Thee face to face;
Here would I touch and handle things unseen,
Here grasp with firmer hand the eternal grace,
And all my weariness upon Thee lean.

Here would I feed upon the bread of God,
Here drink with Thee the royal wine of heaven;
Here would I lay aside each earthly load,
Here taste afresh the calm of sin forgiven.

[1] *The Song of Songs*, chap. ii. 9.

This is the hour of banquet and of song,
This is the heavenly table spread for me;
Here let me feast, and feasting still prolong
The brief, bright hour of fellowship with Thee."

3. At this point, however, another question at once comes into view, namely, In what respect, and to what extent and with what special blessings to us, does the exalted Christ now give Himself in the Supper?

If the explanations just given have been apprehended, the only answer to be returned will be seen to be that, in the Supper, Jesus gives Himself in all the grace and glory He died to purchase, and ever lives to bestow. This, of course, is offered to that faith which is the first requisition of the Gospel. In His life on earth, Jesus made Himself altogether one with the many He came to lead to the Father. As the glorified Son on high He makes each of them one with Himself still: "as He is, so are we in this world." Hence, also, the Lord Jesus communicates this grace as His disciples maintain fellowship with Him by faith, using, in the strength of the Spirit, the ordinances of the Church; and not least is He prepared, in the Lord's Supper, to bless them with all spiritual blessings in the heavenly places. As a venerable symbol of the Scottish Church puts it, "We are made partakers of His body and blood, with all His benefits, to our spiritual nourishment and growth in grace." [1]

But while this is so, the very form of the Supper seems to suggest certain special blessings on which the

[1] *Shorter Catechism*, Q. 96.

believing recipient is entitled to fasten as yet more manifestly than others intended to be desired and obtained.

Is not a special prominence assigned, for example, to the blessing of forgiveness? So we must interpret the words of Jesus in instituting the Supper. It was doubtless this great boon that was uppermost in the minds of the Israelites at the ratification of the Sinaitic Covenant. When the blood was poured out upon the altar, the truth taught then was, that the penalty due to their sins was remitted, and that their life was restored to the favour of God. But the New Covenant soon to be sealed by the blood of the Lamb of God was far superior to that which was given to Israel. By one offering, Jesus was to put sin away, through the sacrifice of Himself. And though, as we have seen, it was no special aim of the Supper to mirror the manner of this sin-offering, but only to proclaim the fact, it was also as a token of guilt being put away that His followers were instructed to drink the wine of the Supper. For Jesus said, "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for many, for the remission of sins." Every time this cup is drunk, we may hear the ancient promise, "And their sins and their iniquities I will remember no more;" and so we may repeat, as an eternally established fact, the old response, "With Thee there is forgiveness that Thou mayest be feared."

Then, again, do not the bread and wine now speak

distinctly also of liberation from the dominion of sin? As we have seen, this too is a fundamental blessing of the Gospel. Those who are baptized by faith into Christ are baptized into His death, and so closely united to Him as One that died to sin, that while they share in His freedom from the guilt of sin they also share in His emancipation from its dominion. Nay more: by the very faith in which they receive forgiveness, they are also inwardly crucified with Christ; the carnal nature within them receives a lesion that, under the grace of the Holy Spirit, will deepen and extend till the soul is freed from the last taint of corruption. As surely as this is given to faith, is it dispensed in the Supper. The separation of the bread and wine speaks of a Saviour who died to sin, but it also holds forth the blessing of separation from the power of corruption.

With equal clearness does the very form of the Supper present the blessing of participating in the holy spiritual nature of Jesus as the Crucified. This, too, is held out to the soul that is prepared to exercise a full-orbed trust in the living Saviour. Holiness is received by faith, as surely as sanctification is the work of God's free grace. He that trusts in the glorified Son, and is thereby born from above, is introduced into such oneness with Him and has a life so truly kin with His that, through abiding in Him, he is capable of receiving into his soul the very spiritual nature, disposition, and character of Christ, and

is so capable also of manifesting it in his whole conduct.[1] It was this, as has been already indicated, that was prefigured in the sprinkling of the blood on the people at the reception of the First Covenant. And it is on the fulfilment of this type that Jesus insisted in speaking to the Jews. "Except ye eat the flesh, and drink the blood, of the Son of man, ye have no life in you,"[2] just means this: "Except through faith in Christ as your propitiation for sin, you also become so fully identified with Him as to be receiving His very holy nature into your hearts, and reproducing it in an obedience like His, ye do not really live in the eternal life of God on earth." This principle applies to the Christian life generally, for it was announced a considerable time previous to the institution of the Supper. But it is impossible to believe that, in moulding these utterances into this form, the Lord Jesus did not have this ordinance already in view, and was not in fact sowing the seeds of those spiritual ideas, of the influence of which in the soul the Supper was to furnish the most potent stimulus and the most tender expression. In any case, it is manifest that, as this gracious assimilation of Christ is open to faith always, it is specially pressed on the believing disciple's acceptance as he partakes of the bread and wine of the Lord's table.

[1] Those who think that this is a mere tenet of the modern Conventional theology should read Marshall's *Scripture Doctrine of Sanctification*. A very useful abridgment has been made by Rev. A. Murray (Nisbet & Co.).

[2] John vi. 53.

Hence, also, another blessing the Supper may be said specially to present, is the gracious obligation of a practical likeness to Jesus in the whole spirit and aim of His life. We say, "gracious obligation;" for here plainly grace and duty are inseparably intertwined; grace merges in the shape of duty fulfilled, and duty draws its strength from grace bestowed. And we call it a "blessing;" for that surely is the highest blessing through which men fulfil the will of God. This obligation, if not directly expressed in the words, "Eating the flesh, and drinking the blood of the Son of man," is certainly implied in them. If there is error in giving this phrase an exclusively practical reference,[1] it is equally wrong to look on it as setting forth a simple privilege. For the union of privilege and responsibility runs through all our existence. In physical life man eats that he may have strength to work. The kind or quantity of food he uses will be reflected in the aspect he wears, and the work he performs. Not otherwise is it in the daily spiritual life. If by faith we are enabled to receive the very disposition of the Son of God into our hearts, it is only in order that, embracing Him with the will as well as with the heart, we as His disciples may receive His character, and so reproduce His life in our daily conduct.

And if this be the law of our ordinary Christian course, it is only what we might expect when we find

[1] This is the view of Dr. J. Macleod Campbell, *Christ the Bread of Life*, p. 102.

this same union reflected and reimposed in the Lord's Supper. Here Christ gives Himself yet more palpably than in the Word as the food of the ransomed soul. If through this channel we really receive Him and His grace, this very participation carries in it at once a most natural impulse, and the very strongest obligation to spend the strength we thereby get in striving to be to the Father what Christ was, and to give to the world what Christ gave; to obey the laws under which the Son of Man lived, and to enter into the conflict with sin in which He triumphed. Apart from the recognition of this blessed responsibility, the Supper as a means of grace is shorn of more than half its power. It cannot indeed otherwise reflect and apply the fulness of redemption. Men are truly saved only when they are saved to be like Christ. It was this the apostles taught: "We were buried therefore with Him through baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we also might walk in newness of life."[1] It was so the Master Himself taught: "Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abideth alone: but if it die, it bringeth forth much fruit."[2] This law was realised first in Christ Himself. But as the next verse shows, it is to be exemplified in us also: "He that loveth his life shall lose it; and he that hateth his life in this world shall keep it unto life eternal." Ourselves grains of

[1] Rom vi. 4. [2] John xii. 24.

living souls, we too are to be sown in the world, and to spend our life in it in the spirit of the very love that prompted Jesus to die for men. So living and dying in Him day by day we have the promise that, as He brought us forth, we too shall go and bring forth much fruit likewise. And to every one who is bent on realising this aim, the Lord's Supper comes in as a very precious help. By means of it we really partake more largely of Christ. And since, as food is essential for work, work only increases the appetite for food, when we assimilate Christ in a believing reception of the Supper, and live out His life in earnest personal effort, we only find Him to be more truly that living bread which came down from heaven, of which, if any man eat, he shall live for ever more. Thus the Lord's Supper operates as a gracious and powerful stimulus in Christian service. Receiving it in its due place and order we are enabled to be stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not vain in the Lord.

But if in the Supper there is laid before us the hope of being thus practically nourished with the very holy nature of Jesus, there will be no difficulty in discerning in it also a very distinct reference to the hope of a blessed immortality. The great use of food is to quicken and nourish life. Most obviously, it is the spiritual life of the soul that the believing reception of the spiritual nature of Jesus is intended to

sustain. But it is impossible to dissociate from this the thought of a new and higher life for the body also. It is not the soul only, but the whole man—soul, body, and spirit—that the Lord Jesus came to redeem. And to this He alludes in the very address we have had before us. "Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood," said He, "hath eternal life;" and then He added, "and I will raise him up at the last day."[1] The inference is undeniable that the more of the spiritual life of Jesus we receive, the more are we inwardly and spiritually prepared for the risen life, which embraces the glorified body as well as the sinless soul. And since we actually do get this at the Lord's table, it is also clear that the whole ordinance is directly fitted to develop and brighten the hope of this glorious destiny. Here, indeed, it is very easy to exaggerate. The false ideas favoured by the Church of Rome here show that, once we deviate from the straight line of simple truth, there is almost no limit to the gross misconceptions into which we may fall. Nor can we wholly clear of this fault those Protestant theologians[2] who, in earlier or later times, have taken any view of the Supper which

[1] John vi. 54.

[2] Calvin undoubtedly went too far in this direction—at least, in occasional expressions; Rev. A. Murray also in our own day—*e.g.*, *Like Christ*, p. 231, where several of Calvin's utterances are quoted. The concentration in the Person of our glorified Lord of all the power that is needed for the complete redemption of humanity, has given rise to many fascinating *theologoumena*. But these are not to be raised to the rank of elements in Christian doctrine without sufficient evidence.

permits them to think of it as being in any sense the exclusive or special medium through which the immortal spiritual body of the future is actually communicated and infused into our life now. The fatal error here is that the Supper itself seems to have attributed to it a power that is beyond the reach of the faith of the ordinary Christian life. But while we avoid this dangerous extreme there is nothing to prevent our holding that, receiving by faith in this ordinance more and more of the very spiritual nature of Jesus, we are at the same time preparing our hearts and characters more fully for entering into an incorruptible physical life, and are actually embracing the hope of having our bodies conformed to His glorious body, more firmly and substantially as the days go on. For in this way the Lord's Supper is only true to its character of being, as one of our teachers use to call it, "the great connecting link between the first and second coming of the Lord."[1]

4. The only other question, the discussion of which fairly falls within the scope of this chapter, is, How does the Lord's Supper become the medium of blessing? Or, in other words, what relation do the elements of the Supper hold to the blessings which it is the undoubted channel of dispensing? This is a point to which passing allusion has already been

[1] *Recollections of the late John Duncan, LL.D.*, p. 99. So Bengel on 1 Cor. xi. 26: "This mystery is the link which connects the extremes of the two dispensations."

made; but, were it only for the sake of bringing out the principles of interpretation it involves, it is well worth being again adverted to.

What the views of the disciples to whom the ordinance was first dispensed were, we cannot doubt. The whole religious service under which they had been trained had accustomed them to regard outward objects as the symbols of spiritual facts. It is not improbable that, even as they partook of the last Passover, they may have had some glimpses of its redemptive significance. In particular, Jesus had by His teaching prepared their minds to see, in external things, instructive signs and representations of His own life-work amongst them. Familiar examples are: "I am the living bread," "I am the light of the world," "I am the good shepherd," "I am the way," "I am the true vine." These and similar expressions must, to His knowledge, have habituated their minds to understand all other such statements as figurative representations of His gracious attitude towards men. And hence it is impossible to conceive that, hearing Jesus speaking to them in the terms of ordinary conversation, they could take any other view of the words, "This is my body," "This cup is my blood." It has often been asserted that in Hebrew the verb "to be" readily took on the sense of "signify," and that if Jesus used the verb in Aramaic, He would very naturally adopt the same meaning. But this is an error. The Hebrew verb does not have this significance. And as

a matter of fact, it is next to certain that Jesus would not use the verb at all. Like a translator of our present Greek Testament into Hebrew, He would simply emphasise the "this," and then say, "*This my body:*" "*This my blood!*"[1] By a native of Syria, such a form of speech would be at once taken as symbolic. Though the disciples therefore may have been far from able to take in all that the words implied, it would certainly be in this direction that they would look for their meaning. And when, afterwards, they came to study these utterances of Jesus in the light of what they had learned of His atoning death, this could not but be the main position they took up. In the view of Paul, taught as he was by the Lord Himself, the bread and wine of the Supper are still what they were to the first disciples — the symbols, and in themselves nothing but the symbols, of the crucified Saviour and the grace which, by the Cross, He won for men. Without a previous vital connection with Jesus, therefore,—a link that faith alone could form,—men could receive nothing from Him in the elements of the Supper. The whole value of the elements lay in the fact that, to a pre-existent faith, they became a medium whereby the soul was brought into a fuller contact with a living and self-communicating Saviour.

That in being so employed they were put to a new

[1] So *e.g.* Delitzsch (*in loc.*): "Zĕh hû guphi: Zĕh hû dāmi." The point, however, is not of such great moment after all. We have the "is" in Greek, and are free to interpret it according to the laws of language generally.

and truly sacred use must be frankly admitted. And in this respect—that is, as intended to be an instrumental aid in the nourishment of the soul—they were to be held apart from all ordinary bread and wine, which was simply intended for the satisfaction of physical appetite. This change of relation to the spiritual life was indicated, as it was confirmed, by the prayer by which the actual distribution of the elements was always preceded. When the Lord Jesus instituted the Supper, He pronounced over both the bread and the wine an eucharistical benediction—that is, a prayer of thanksgiving in which He also invoked the blessing of God on what of the elements was to be used in the Supper. As a judicious expositor [1] has remarked, "the idea of consecration is necessarily included. Wine, as wine, is not the sacramental symbol of Christ's blood, but only when solemnly consecrated for that purpose. Even our ordinary food is said to 'be sanctified by the word of God and prayer,' [2] because it is set apart by a religious service to the end for which it was appointed. So the cup of blessing is the cup which, by the benediction pronounced over it, is 'set apart from a common to a sacred use.'" Since this is true also of the bread, the elements are plainly to be regarded as sanctified organs of communication betwixt Christ and the soul. Yet in the elements themselves no substantive change has taken place. What of them has been partaken of has simply served as a sacra-

[1] Cf. Hodge *First Corinthians*, p. 227. [2] 1 Tim. iv. 5.

mental channel of blessing. What of them remains is but bread and wine, in the same condition as when they were first brought to the table.

This statement, we have good grounds for holding, fairly represents the views of the primitive Church. But very speedily there began to operate influences by which these simple and wholesome convictions were broken up. When the Bishop of Rome and the Christian community there began to assert their claim to superiority over the other portions of the Church, and especially when, to further the dominion of the clergy over the laity, the presbyter assumed the function of a priest, and professed to offer, in the bread and wine of the Supper, a sacrifice which still exercised the power of the sacrifice of Christ, and infallibly conferred forgiveness on every one that received it, then it became necessary also to claim that Christ was present in the Supper in a sense and to an extent in which He was present in no other ordinance; and, finally, that the substance of the bread and wine was, by the prayer of consecration, changed into the actual body and blood—into the true humanity and divinity of the Saviour. Some centuries, of course, elapsed ere this doctrine of Transubstantiation was fully formulated; but at present it is the universal creed of the Church of Rome. Looking back through all the controversy, her theologians most strenuously contend, from the words of institution, that this is the view the Lord and His disciples intended to be taken of the

elements; and that the same power of transmuting the bread of the Supper into His own person, which He exercised, abides with His regularly ordained servants still.

Into all the details of this question it is needless for us to attempt to enter here. But, setting aside at once the theory that the ministers of the Church are in any exclusive sense priests, on the plain grounds of the all-sufficiency of Christ's one sacrifice and the spiritual priesthood of all believers, we may briefly show how inconsistent the idea of the elements of bread and wine undergoing any change, which would make them other than material symbols of Christ and His grace, is, alike with the words of Jesus and the whole relationship to the disciples in which He stood then and was to stand for ever.

For, in the first place, we again ask, What is there in the words of institution to indicate that such a change was intended to take place? In alluding to the bread and wine, while they were being used for the celebration of the preceding Paschal Meal, the Lord must have spoken of them as bread and wine, and nothing more. Of the cup, for example, He says, "Take this and divide it among yourselves." And when, as immediately thereafter, He proceeds to use these same elements for the purpose of the Supper, He says of the bread, "This is my body, given for you," who can detect in His utterance anything fitted to teach that the bread is no longer the same bread that it formerly was? In the conspicuous absence of any contrary in-

timation we are still constrained to regard the Lord as assuming only the symbolic meaning of the elements.

Besides, what evidence is there that such a change in the substance of the elements, as the Romish view demands, does take place? When the Lord Jesus put forth His wonder-working power on the body or food of man, not only did He give some indication that He was to effect a change, but the change itself, either in the way of substance or extension, was always such as men could take cognizance of by the exercise of the senses. It was so, for instance, in changing the water into wine, and in multiplying the loaves of bread. But, according to this dogma, these means of contact with the external world, which God has given us, and which, as rational creatures, we are bound implicitly to trust, are in the Supper set at naught. The vain fancy, therefore, must be rejected. The disciples, at the first communion, gave no indication of their attention being arrested by any transmutation; nor can men discern it still. A change of substance without a change of attributes is the figment of a blinded mind.

The position we take up is all the more impregnable that such a change as is represented to take place is altogether inconsistent with what is taught in Scripture concerning the whole nature of the glorified Son of God. In short, the idea is inconceivable and impossible. The risen body of Christ is not simply the body of His humiliation raised again, but that body raised and inwardly transformed. It is a spiritual body; so that

as His physical movements after resurrection indicated, it is now no longer subject to the laws that formerly governed His life on earth. The Popish fiction, not only limits the operation of the Divine nature of the Son of God to His physical presence, but also distorts and obscures the very fact of his glorification.

These objections to the Romish interpretation of the words of the Lord we believe to be insuperable. But if anything were still wanting to show its inanity, that would be found in the fact of its being utterly at variance with the spirituality of the relationship which Jesus all along taught was to exist betwixt Himself and His followers. It need not be proved at length that the first steps to saving union with Christ can be taken only by faith. Without this spiritual confidence there could be no life from Him in the soul. Faith, moreover, is in no way dependent on outward manifestations of His presence: "Thomas, because thou hast seen, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." It is as faith grows that the power of Christ will be felt in the soul. And the great agency for effecting this progress, as it is the great agency in implanting the life of faith at first, is the quickening energy of the Third Person of the Trinity, the Spirit of the Father and the Son. Barnabas was "full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." Paul prayed that the Ephesians might be "strengthened with might by His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith."

To institute an ordinance of such a nature that, in virtue of it, the vital necessity of faith and the working of His indwelling Spirit become practically ignored, would never have entered the mind of the Lord Jesus. Yet this is a conclusion to which the Popish view of His words inevitably leads. For it puts into the hands of the priests a means of imparting what is supposed to be the blessing of the Saviour's presence to souls in whom the life of faith and the operation of the Spirit have never begun. By this critical test, therefore, as well as by other arguments, this doctrine of a substantive change in the elements stands condemned as unworthy of the respect of a Christian Church.

In the face of this and all other similar interpretations of the language of Christ, therefore, we are led to cleave to the simple view of the elements of the Supper which the first disciples must have cherished. The bread and wine are symbols of the body and blood of the Lord, in the true spiritual sense of these terms, and are in themselves nothing more. Their great function in the Supper is to be simply an aid to faith by suffering the eye to rest on them, and the hands to handle, and the mouth to taste them. Yet, as used for a sacred and spiritual purpose, they are to be regarded as separated to the Lord and consecrated by His blessing. And when partaken of, with faith in Christ and in dependence on the power of the indwelling Spirit, they do together become a sure means of receiving all the grace that is in Christ Jesus. Not too strongly did Archbishop Usher write when he said,

"In the use of this holy ordinance as verily as a man with his bodily hand and mouth receiveth the earthly creatures, so verily doth he, with his spiritual hand and mouth, if any such he have, receive the body and blood of Christ."[1] And the Savoy Declaration, written two years after Usher's death, only repeats the same view when it says, "Worthy receivers outwardly partaking of the visible elements in this Sacrament, do then also inwardly, by faith, really and indeed, yet not carnally and corporally, but spiritually, receive and feed upon Christ crucified and all benefits of His death; the body and blood of Christ being then not corporally or carnally in, with, or under the bread or wine, yet as really but spiritually present to the faith of believers in that ordinance as the elements themselves are to the outward senses."

This last fact, of course, is never to be obscured in the midst of any controversy. It is indeed the principal truth which the words of institution, taken as a whole, are intended by Jesus to convey. The bread is a symbol of the body of Christ and the wine is a symbol of the blood of Christ. But it is a very superficial view of the meaning of Jesus to say that He is simply affirming that the bread and wine are respectively the symbols of the spiritual realities they are associated with. Looked at merely in itself, the word "is" in the sentences, "This is my body," "This is my blood," cannot mean anything more than "represents;" and it is true that the fact that the bread

[1] *Answer to a Jesuit*, chap. iii.

and wine simply represent the body and blood of Christ, must in any case be the meaning that underlies the sentence. But looked at in the light of the whole action and intention of Jesus in the ordinance, "is" also implies or, to use what is perhaps logically a more precise word, *connotes* the communication and the participation of the body and blood of the Lord. "For," to quote the language of Turretine already referred to, "although the signs are theoretically significant, yet they do not subsist in this significance, but have besides a practical significance, at once sealing and exhibitive, in their own manner and sense, of the thing signified, as the surrender of a key has the practical significance of a putting in possession, and seals and exhibits it."[1] Yet even though we take this to be the literal interpretation[2] of the words there is no countenance given to the Romish view. Signs the bread and wine are to begin with, and even while they become unitedly, in the hands of Christ, channels for the communication of spiritual blessings, signs they continue to be in themselves; and, after they have been so used, signs they still remain. The substance of the blessing can be found only in the living Christ, "wearing privileges which He bought with blood and raised to give what He died to procure."[3]

[1] Turr. *Loc.* xix., *Quaes.* iii. § iv.

[2] It was to establish this position that Dr. T. S. L. Vogan wrote his elaborate Treatise on *The True Doctrine of the Eucharist* (Longmans, 1871). There can be no doubt that he succeeded in his main contention. But the value of the work is sadly marred by its great diffuseness and its occasional erratic tendencies.

[3] Dr. J. O. Dykes in his noble sermon on *Preaching Christ Crucified.*

Thus, then, have we endeavoured to set forth the real nature of the Lord's Supper. The course of our explanation may have been tortuous, but the result is easily expressed. Of the Supper, as of the kindred sacrament of Baptism, we have simply to say that it becomes an effectual means of salvation, not from any virtue in it or in him that doth administer it; but only by the blessing of Christ and the working of His Spirit in them that by faith receive it. This we believe to be the spirit in which the Pentecostal disciples used it; and thus we are able to join in the devout wish of a writer quoted at the outset of this chapter, "Would that we now could keep the feast as they kept it then! But how much must be done ere that be possible! The moss of time must be cleared away from the monumental stone, that its inscription may become once more distinctly legible; the accumulated débris of a millennium and a-half of theological controversies about sacraments must be carted out of sight and mind; the truth as it is in Jesus must be separated from the alloy of human error; the homely rite of the Supper must be divested of the state robes of elaborate ceremonial by which it has been all but stifled, and allowed to return to congenial primitive simplicity. These things, so devoutly to be wished, will come at last: if not on earth, in that day when the Lord Jesus will drink new wine with His people in the Kingdom of His Father."[1]

[1] Bruce: *The Training of the Twelve*, p. 370.

CHAPTER VIII.

—o—

The Specific Purposes of the Supper.

Though names are but sounds, those who are conversant with the history of mankind will readily allow that they have greater influence on the opinions of the generality of men than most people are aware of. They invariably give rise to certain associations; these influence opinion, and opinion governs practice.

G. Campbell, D.D.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SPECIFIC PURPOSES OF THE SUPPER.

THE more general purposes of the Supper have been already indicated. Looking back to the past it enables us to recall the death for sin which Jesus died on Calvary; operating in our present experience, it becomes a means of receiving grace from a living and exalted Saviour; looking forward to the future, it assumes the form of an earnest, that is, a sample and a pledge, of the blessing that awaits us in the marriage supper of the Lamb, when Jesus returns to receive His people unto Himself. Certain more special ends served by this ordinance have also, in passing, been alluded to. But these statements, true as far as they go, can hardly be regarded as embracing all that Scripture enables us to lay down on this topic. And now that the real nature of the Supper has been precisely set forth, it will be a manifest help towards the readier apprehension of the more practical aspects of our subject yet to be dealt with, if at this stage we examine more carefully what the New Testament has to say of the more specific purposes

which it was intended to fulfil. In doing this we shall have an opportunity of seeing how these ends are reflected in the various names it bears in Scripture, or has had applied to it by writers of later date.

1. First in order, then, comes the great design of *proclaiming* or announcing the central event in the redeeming work of Christ, that is, *His death*. At a certain stage in the celebration of the Passover, we have seen, an opportunity was given to the head of the household of explaining or "showing forth" the meaning of the whole service and the separate items of the feast. A similar opportunity is said to be given in the observance of the Lord's Supper. For, to the usual words of institution, the Apostle Paul adds this explanation of his own: "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." The meaning of this statement evidently is, that those who partake of the Supper do by their very action [1] announce that Christ died on the cross, and that not merely a martyr's death, but a death on behalf of men, and while offering a sacrifice for the sin of the world which all the race is bound to accept. The death of Christ, in other words, is here announced as the foundation of His whole redeeming enterprise, the predestined issue of His whole previous

[1] If, however, we may assume that, in the celebration of the communion, the words of institution were rehearsed by the presiding minister—and, particularly, if they were also repeated by the people at the table after him—then the "proclamation" would be oral as well as formal.

life and ministry, and the starting-point of the whole exaltation He now enjoys.

The opportunity of entering into this service is plainly regarded by the apostle as a great privilege. In the ordinary worship of the Church the proclamation of Christ crucified, in the word of the truth of the Gospel, falls only to those who are specially qualified for the duty. But in this practical announcement of the death of Jesus all take part. It is regarded as a joint testimony. Just as every action in the ordinance is attributed, not to any minister of the Church who may preside at its dispensation, but to the whole body of the people — for the words are "*we* bless" and "*we* break,"—so here the proclamation that is made of Christ's death is attributed to the congregation as a whole. On every occasion when the Supper is celebrated, all the communicants are, for the time, silent preachers of the Gospel of the Cross. With one accord they announce the glad tidings that Christ died for sin, and rose again, and that there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved.

At the same time it is very evident that, to have any value, this proclamation must be based on a personal confession of Christ, on the part of the individual worshipper. This also is practically yielded by every one who takes his place at the table in a right spirit. It was in their public baptism that the primitive Christians first made confession of Christ as a

Saviour. But this token of allegiance was confirmed and kept up by their continuing to take part in the Supper. And so, whatever difference may obtain now as to the method of entering into full communion with the Church, this same acknowledgment of personal interest must be perpetuated.

Here, accordingly, the observance of the Lord's Supper comes before us as a positive duty, as well as a privilege. It is at this very point, indeed, that the force of the injunction of the Lord is felt, "Do this . . . for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death." Language could not more distinctly show that, according to Paul's view, this public confession of interest in His sacrifice was a primary object Jesus had in view in giving this ordinance at all. And the motive on His part, from which the commandment sprang, cannot be mistaken. It is really a compassionate yearning over the surrounding world. While the Gospel is being preached to men, the Lord would also have their hearts touched by a primitive witness to the fact that there is in their midst a society to which His death, as the procuring cause of salvation, is everything. He would fain have His people so manifestly glorying in His cross that all who hear of the ordinance shall be led to think of what that cross means, and so, if possible, be made to turn to Him. Wherever, in fact, the ordinance is duly observed, this public testimony is given. And as it goes down the stream of history,

witnessing to Christ and Him crucified, "openly setting forth Christ crucified" before the eyes of men, the Lord has a provision whereby each new generation shall hear of the riches of His grace, and be summoned to trust in Him. The day is surely coming, when, along with the spoken testimony of men, the inarticulate speech of the Supper shall go forth through all the earth, and its words to the ends of the world.

2. Closely connected with this first aim of the Supper, as indeed the root from which it springs, is the more fundamental purpose stated in the words of Jesus, recorded by Luke, "This is my body, which is given for you: this do *in remembrance of me.*" Or, as Paul, referring to the wine instead of the bread, puts it, "This cup is the new covenant of my blood: this do, as oft ye drink it, in remembrance of me." What does this phrase, "in remembrance of me," really include?

Putting on the words the very simplest meaning which they conceive them able to bear, some theologians hold that all they enjoin upon the disciples of Christ is that, when they partake of the Supper, they are to reflect upon Him, thinking over what He was on earth, what He is to them now, and what He is to be to them in the future. If they do this deliberately and devoutly, they will have Jesus present in their minds, as they would have any other object on which they concentrated their thoughts, and so get a

certain impulse of heart and affection towards Him. This is essentially the Unitarian position. As a preacher of this connection has said, "It [the Supper] is too much connected with the sacrifice or death of Christ on Calvary, and with some theory of the way of salvation through His atoning blood; and yet, singularly enough, the Master Himself appeared to have nothing in His mind but a loving brother's desire to leave behind him some pathetic memorial of a communion that was passing away, but only to receive the consecration of the heavenly world."[1] And so even ministers of the Church of England have been known to teach. One of them has found no better illustration of the presence of Christ, as remembered at His table, than this: "At the poor man's breakfast table there is no objective presence of the late Mr. Cobden; but if at any time the poor man gratefully remembers that it is to Cobden he is indebted for his cheap loaf, then, and so often as the man's heart thus recalls Cobden, there is a subjective presence of the great statesman. He is present to the mind and feelings of the poor man; he is subjectively present in the man's memory and affection."[2] In precisely this way, he thinks, the Lord Jesus becomes the object of memory and affection to His followers. How utterly inconsistent with the real nature of faith in Christ, as well

[1] J. Page Hopps, *A Symposium on the Lord's Supper*, p. 28.

[2] Rev. J. M'Naught, *Coena Domini*. Cf. an interesting notice by Principal Cave in the *British Quarterly Review*, October 1880, Art. II.

as with the close union it establishes betwixt Him and the soul, and the reality and depth of the intercourse betwixt them it maintains, this view is, the preceding portions of our exposition have, it is hoped, made sufficiently plain. But lest, even in this single phrase, there should seem to be given the slightest ground for resting content with such a superficial conception of the Supper, it may be well to note briefly the actual steps of the spiritual process it describes.

Manifestly the first element in it is not mere reflection, but rather recollection. As the way in which the Supper is brought before us is fitted to suggest, we are, at the Lord's table, invited to recall the whole attitude in which, at that particular juncture, the Lord stood to His disciples and the world. We have to remember the deep sorrow that filled His heart at the thought of parting from His own, the dark thundercloud of suffering for us into which He was preparing to enter, the utterly unselfish affection that He still cherished for His people, the compassionate yearning for a lost world that still filled His heart, and the wondrous joy in the prospect of assured triumph that bore Him up in spite of the cross and shame He had soon to face. These facts we cannot too vividly keep before our minds. Only they are to be regarded, not simply as concerned with one who is no longer on earth, but as marking features in a character which manifests itself in power amongst men still.

Here, however, it has to be noted that this remem-

brance is associated with a certain outward expression. "Do this," said Jesus, "in remembrance of me." Recollection, alone therefore, does not exhaust the significance of the injunction. That the remembrance may be of the kind Jesus wanted, it must be associated with the practical element of imitation. This is attained in dispensing and receiving the whole ordinance according to the method of the Master. At each point of the service we are to be inspired by the thought that we are saying what Jesus said and doing what Jesus did, after His example and in His spirit of faith and hope and love. We do not remember Him aright unless we are aiming at a spiritual reproduction of the Supper as it came from His own hands.

But doing this with trust in Him, and in dependence on His indwelling Spirit, what can this remembrance prove to be—what can it issue in—what can it have as its inevitable accompaniment, but the actual enjoyment of His presence? As when the disciples met together alone for fear of the Jews were speaking of Jesus, He, ere ever they were aware, was really in their midst, so, when assembling at the table with trust in Christ, we urge our memory across the track of the night in which He was betrayed, with yet greater freedom does He manifest Himself unto us; and, like His followers of old, we are glad when we see the Lord. It is this kind of remembrance, beginning in recollection, sustained by imita-

tion and ending in joyful recognition and communion[1] that Jesus had in view when He said, "Do this in," that is, with a view to, "remembrance of me." His desire is not fulfilled unless it can be said of those who came to the Supper, "Whom not having seen, ye love; on whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice greatly with joy unspeakable and full of glory: receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls."[2]

In view of these facts, the name, "Memorial," so commonly applied to the Supper, is seen to be really insufficient to bring out its full scope. Nowhere is this term so used in the New Testament. The word itself does indeed occur there, once as applied to the act of Mary of Bethany in anointing Jesus, and again as used to describe the prayers and alms of Cornelius rising up to heaven. But, in both of these instances, it is simply an outward token serving to keep or put in remembrance that is designated. If, therefore, the name were confined to the first purpose of the Supper, in relation to the world, there would be no objection to it; for, in that aspect, the ordinance is a true

[1] Cf. D. Schulz, *Die Christliche Lehre vom Heiligen Abendmahl*, s. 224. "'In remembrance of me:' that is, not merely *in recollection of me:* for in the Greek words, there by no means lies merely the passive idea of *not forgetting*, but the active concept of a renewed living movement and effort of the heart: consequently here the idea of the fellowship of life evermore quickened and strengthened through the repeated festival of the death of Jesus, and of the continued influential unity betwixt Christ and believers."

[2] 1 Peter i. 8.

memorial. But as applied to describe the operation of the Supper in the life of Christians, it comes short of the mark. For while it calls the memory into action, the Lord's Supper is also essentially the medium of a direct contemplation of the living present Saviour, which thus strengthened and purified we are to carry with us from the table into our whole spiritual life.

Hence, also, still more objectionable is it to describe the Supper as "a commemorative sacrifice." This is a term that still finds favour with theologians of the Anglican Church.[1] But though its use has been sanctioned by many who did not hold views of the Supper specially erroneous, its impropriety cannot be questioned. Apparently the idea of sacrifice first found entrance into the exposition of this ordinance through the provisions brought to the Agapē being called the offering or oblation. When the sacerdotal theory of the Church began to take root, the word very readily became transferred to the elements of the Supper. But there is only confusion in this. The bread and wine of the Lord's table are not in any sense offered by us to God. Rather are they only symbolic gifts from God to us. To import the idea of sacrifice into the remembrance of Christ is to commit the mistake attributed to a Spanish painter who, in endeavouring to put on canvas the scene of the Lord's last Passover, made the chalice in the

[1] Cf. Bishop Beveridge: *Sermons*, vol. i. p. 50; and *Encyclopædia Brittanica*, Art. "Eucharist," vol. viii. p. 652.

hands of the Saviour so conspicuous that it diverted attention from the Saviour whom he wished to be the central figure in the picture. Under the guise of exalting the value of the Supper, the use of this term only externalises it and tends to strip it of its real power as a means of communion with the glorified Lord.

3. Rightly fulfilled, therefore, these two purposes of the Supper only open the way for the third and in some respects most characteristic of all, namely, that of *personal intercourse with Christ.* One cannot read the records of the first Supper, as set forth in the Gospel of the beloved disciple, without feeling that this constituted its main attraction. What made that evening such a hallowed time to the disciples was the fact that Jesus was then in their midst, laying bare His whole heart to them, manifesting His changeless sympathy and drawing them to Himself with cords of love. This, however, is a blessing that Jesus can bestow at any time upon His disciples still. Dwelling in their hearts by faith, He can meet them, and speak to them, and teach them through the Spirit applying the truth; and, as we have seen, He has instituted the Supper for the special purpose, among others, of their drawing near to Him personally and receiving out of His fulness. When taking into hand and mouth the symbols of Christ's body and blood we bless the God of peace who brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, through the

blood of the everlasting covenant, even our Lord Jesus, we prepare ourselves for receiving by faith the presence of the once-crucified but now ever-living Saviour more fully into our hearts. For here, specially, His own promise abides true, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with Me."[1]

What the nature of this presence is must now be very obvious. Since the bread and wine remain simply bread and wine, and, though consecrated to a sacred purpose, in no sense undergo any transformation of their original material nature, there can be no such Real Presence here as the Romish Church chooses to call alone "Real." Yet is there a real presence of Christ at His table and that too, in the evangelic import of the term, of a special kind. For in one view, Christ is everywhere present; not of course in His human nature—though so the Lutheran Church teaches—but by His Divine nature and the Divine Spirit. But to those that trust in Him, He manifests Himself in their hearts, through faith, and by the Comforter whom He sent. He is ever present to them through His gracious self-revelation in their inner life; and, though it may not be always felt with the same intensity, this grace is really ministered, on all occasions, as the days go on. And when, in obedience to His behest, His disciples appear at the table, it is a fuller measure

[1] Rev. iii. 20.

of this same sufficient presence that they receive. So the greatest theologian of the Anglican Church carefully puts it: "The real presence of Christ's most blessed body and blood is not, therefore, to be sought for in the Sacrament, but in the worthy receiver of the Sacrament. I see not which way it should be gathered, by the words of Christ, when and where the bread is His body or the cup His blood, but only in the very heart and soul of him which receiveth them. As for the sacraments they really exhibit, but, for aught we can gather out of that which is written of them, they are not really nor do really contain in themselves, that grace which with them or by them it pleaseth God to bestow." [1]

The presence of Christ which we have in the Supper, therefore, may be regarded as marked by these features. It is, first of all, *spiritual*, having nothing about it that is external or sensuous, fanciful or magical. It is also *vital*, not only because it touches the inner life of those that use it, but also because, carrying with it all the grace and strength of Christ's body and blood, it really nourishes their whole spiritual nature. In this respect it might also be called *direct*, because the Supper is not an instrument only by which Christ from afar influences the soul, but a channel whereby He Himself comes into closest contact with

[1] Hooker's *Eccl. Polity*, Book v. chap. lxvii. (Tegg's edition, vol. ii. p. 2). In this and similar utterances of Hooker, the word "exhibit" is used in the special sense of "administer" or "apply."

the soul and puts forth on it, by the Spirit, His healing power. This presence is *active* too, because Jesus, in the Supper, influences and stimulates the active energies of His disciples, not using their hearts as a silent shrine, but rather as a platform for the manifestation of His might. And it is also *perpetual*, because though the occasion of communion may pass away, and the measure of the communication change, the presence of Christ, as the Lord of the whole life, is to a regenerate soul a gift that shall never be alienated. In this view, the real presence of Christ is seen to be at once the light of the whole Christian life, and the special charm and power of the Supper. To this all else is utterly subordinate. We may love the minister who outwardly presides at the table, and cling to those amongst whom we sit, but it is not from them the benefit flows. The efficacy of the ordinance is dependent only on the blessed presence of the Lord and the nutritive power of the grace which He then, through the Spirit, suffers to flow forth from Himself. This also, therefore, forms an element in the obligatory character of the ordinance. The spiritual life within us, as quickened and sustained by faith, may certainly make progress apart from the use of this ordinance. But if, as we are here taught, it is an avenue ordained by Christ to give Him a special opportunity of meeting with His people and, as it were, feeding them with His own hand, no one who neglects it can ordinarily hope to reach all the strength and stature of Christian life and experience

destined for him, without diligently using it for this end. This the Church must be gladly content to do "till He come."

It is this design of the ordinance accordingly that is reflected in the leading names applied to it in the New Testament. We find it named, for example, "the Lord's Supper."[1] The Paschal Feast was a Jewish Supper, strictly so called. It was held at "the hour" usually set apart for that meal, and its religious aim did in no way alter its original character. The first Communion was celebrated at the same time as the Passover, and thus naturally received from the first disciples the same general name. It is well called "the Lord's Supper," not only because it was instituted by the Lord Jesus Himself, but also because over the use of it, and those who partake of it, He is the sole President. This name is also of value as elevating the Supper to the rank of a Divine and therefore unchangeable and perpetual ordinance. A figurative variation of it, with the very same meaning, is "the Lord's Table."[2] It is a mere coincidence that, in the prophecies of Malachi,[3] the sacrificial altar of Jehovah once bears this name. Its special interest lies in the fact that it recalls the tender and homely fellowship which the disciples of Jesus enjoy at the Supper.

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 20. [2] 1 Cor. x. 21.

[3] Mal. i. 7. We have been surprised to find Principal Edwards laying so much stress on this reference, and apparently wavering on Heb. xiii. 10 (*Corinthians*, p. 261). In his *Exposition of Hebrews*, however, he is more decided.

The same thing may be said of another descriptive term, which also connects the ordinance with the Master, namely, "the Cup of the Lord."[1] This name has never come into general use in the Church, probably just because the wine is the second element of the Supper, though by no means secondary. The designation, however, is of great importance as proving that both symbols are essential to the constitution of the ordinance, and that both are of equal rank as well as equally accessible. By these very names of the Supper, therefore, we are reminded that it is with the living personal Christ, who instituted the Supper on the night in which He was betrayed, that we have still to deal; and that, being the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever, He is with us in all the fulness of the condescending love and friendship which He then showed.

That this spiritual intercourse with the unseen Saviour, which the believing exercised soul enjoys so richly, should lie beyond the world's ken, is only what might be expected from the nature of the case. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance, the whole efficacy and fruit of which is dispensed by the Spirit of Christ. "But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, for they are spiritually discerned."[2] Through never having had his heart and eye opened by the Lord, he has not the faculty

[1] 1 Cor. x. 21. [2] 1 Cor. ii. 14.

for seeing either the worth or the operation of His grace. This whole rite, therefore, cannot but wear an aspect of mystery to those who view it from without. And even those who are within the circle of Christ's followers must often feel that it is only to their advancing experience that all the riches of love and wisdom it suggests become gradually opened. As a symbolical channel, by which the infinite grace of God comes into contact with the unfathomable abyss of human sin and infirmity, it will always have in its meaning and operation depths which man will not find laid bare to his apprehension any more than the limitless maze of the vaulted sky above, or the hidden world where life first emerges below. Simple as the ordinance looks, there is about it much for the knowledge of which we must be content to await the great hereafter.[1]

It is this feature accordingly that seems to be reflected in the name "Sacrament." For the chief element in the significance of the word, as thus used, is "sacred mystery." This meaning, of course, it acquired only by degrees. At first it was applied to the deposit or pledge which litigants in a Roman court of justice gave to be forfeited to a temple, if they

[1] Cf. the noble words of Calvin, *Institutio*, Cap. xvii. 5-7. It is this mystic depth of the Lord's Supper that sets at nought all mere external additions to its ritual—that makes it indeed, when unadorned, adorned the most. What Tennyson says of "the flower in the crannied wall" is true also of the Supper. If we could understand it fully, we should be able to tell all that "God and man is."

should be worsted in the suit. It then came to be applied to the military oath. As an oath was considered a deeply sacred thing, this usage prepared the way for its being transferred to any event or action or ceremony which had a deeper meaning than that which lay on the surface. It is doubtless in this last and most general sense that the word is chiefly applied to the Supper. It sets this ordinance before us as a deep, inward, inscrutable means of grace, a channel of mercy which the Lamb that sits upon the throne opens and no man shuts, and shuts and no man opens. And who that considers what he has to tell Christ at the table, and thinks of the great work which the Spirit has yet to do in *his* heart, that He can do in no other, would desire for a moment to have the grace of the Supper less mysterious than it is? For, to use again the words of the wise writer already quoted, "If any man suppose that this were too great stupidity and dulness, let us see whether the apostles of our Lord themselves have not done the like. It appeareth, by many examples, that they of their own disposition were very scrupulous and inquisitive, yea, in other cases of less importance and less difficulty, always apt to move questions. How cometh it to pass that, so few words of so high a mystery being uttered, they receive with gladness the gift of Christ and make no show of doubt or scruple? . . . They had at that time a sea of comfort and joy to wade in, and we, by that which they did are taught that this

heavenly food is given for the satisfying of our empty souls and not for the exercising of our curious and subtle wits." [1]

4. To those who understand what is meant by personal communion with Christ at His table it will be no surprise to find that another prominent design of the Supper is to give a special opportunity of *personal surrender to the Lord.* Here, again, the Supper only gathers up significant elements of the two Old Testament rites with which it is vitally connected. In the Passover itself, it is true, there was no special act of self-dedication, except in so far as the observance of the feast, according to the word of the Lord, implied it. But as the nation came to celebrate this ordinance there was a regular accompaniment of the rites which had personal self-surrender for its chief significance. This was the presentation or waving of the first ripe sheaf of harvest on the second day of the feast, which meant that, as the whole national life was sustained by the bounty of the Lord, so to Him belonged the whole active energies which it embodied. It was this return also that was virtually yielded, when, during the ratification of the Old Covenant, the people in response to Moses said, " All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." This same surrender accordingly is implied in our presenting ourselves to be partakers of the Lord's Supper. To have special outward opportunities of communion with Christ is a great

[1] Hooker's *Eccl. Polity*, Book v. chap. lxvii. (Tegg's ed. pp. 4, 5).

privilege. But he who enjoys them cannot escape the corresponding obligations. Even at His table Jesus is a King and can bestow His grace only on the regal condition of entire devotion to His will. By the very fact of our participation in the Supper, therefore, we yield ourselves to the Lord and pledge ourselves to be faithful to Him and His cause. It is a silent acknowledgment of our preparedness to present our bodies to Him a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is our reasonable service.[1] This indeed is the only sacrifice in the case. Spiritually and by faith we partake of the sacrifice of Christ crucified, and to Him again, as the living Lord, we with thankfulness yield ourselves as a burnt-offering. It was in this spirit Abraham dealt with Melchisedek. When the priest of the Most High God brought forth bread and wine, Abraham gave Him tithes of all. So now as Christ Jesus gives Himself, as the Lamb that once was slain, to His friends, they give themselves anew to

[1] Rom. xii. 1.—As the beautiful prayer of the Anglican Communion Service indicates, this is true of the "body" in the special sense of the word. Says Dean Goulburn, "It is true indeed that the body is 'sinful' and therefore intrinsically unworthy of this glorious consecration. But through our union with Christ (the union which by a faithful reception of this sacrament is cemented) the sinful body is made clean by Christ's body (the body in which he bore our sins upon the tree) even as the sinful soul is washed, through the spilling of the blood of Christ in expiation of sin. Purified through this union, the body becomes fit to be a sacrifice, and accordingly is yielded unto God in the words of the Post-Communion Prayer, 'Here we offer and present our souls and *bodies* to be a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice unto Thee.' *On the Communion Office*, p. 259 (Rivingtons).

Him as those that are alive from the dead, and pledge themselves to carry out the practical work of eating His flesh and drinking His blood in the midst of their daily life.

It is this purpose of the Supper that is now most commonly associated with the name "Sacrament." One use of this word, we have seen, was to describe the Roman military oath, that is, the formal pledge "by which the Roman soldiers mutually engaged themselves at the first enlisting never to desert their standards, or turn their backs upon the enemy or abandon their general—this employment teaching us the sacredness which the Romans attached to their military engagements, and going far to account for their victories."[1] In the Christian profession, the idea was most precisely realised in the primitive adult baptism. For then the newly-enlisted Christian soldier took his place in the ranks of Christ. But it is admitted on all hands that the same principle applies to the Supper. For, to quote the language of a great symbol already alluded to, "the Lord's Supper is to be observed by all true believers . . . for their further engagement in and to all duties which they owe unto Him." As the poet Cowper puts it, the Church must always prove herself to be on earth "the sacramental host of God's elect." There is a great battle to be fought out in the world betwixt the Divine purpose of love and the insurrection of the Wicked One. Christ,

[1] Trench, *Study of Words*, p. 138 (1888).

the Seed of the woman and the Son of God, came to destroy his work of sin, and is exalted in heaven to complete the victory. Now around His table He gathers His followers to prepare them by food and cheer for taking part in the conflict. Who that lifts the cup of blessing to his lips with any sense of what its contents mean, will hesitate to yield himself to the Lord in body, soul, and spirit, waiting the while for that richer baptism in fire through which alone he can advance with confidence and exhibit the prowess of a sanctified follower of the Lamb?

5. This brings us to another great purpose of the Supper, which falls to be noted here, namely, *communion with fellow-Christians.* The Passover was a social meal and the occasion of a family gathering. The feast after the ratification of the Covenant also had much the same character. In the Supper, it is safe to say, next to communion with Christ Himself, this is the most prominent feature with which it is stamped. No topic was so much insisted on by Jesus at the table, as the relations of the disciples to one another. Out of their common connection with Him as Elder Brother and Master and Friend, sprang the relationship of brother and friends among themselves. This, He continually teaches, was to be acknowledged and manifested in love: "A new commandment give I unto you, that ye love one another: . . . By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples,

if ye have love one to another."[1] From all these facts, it was rightly inferred by the apostles that a chief design of the Supper was to give disciples an opportunity of acknowledging the relationship that in Christ subsisted amongst them, and of cementing it yet more closely. This comes out specially in the teaching of Paul: "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not a communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not a communion of the body of Christ?"[2] Here the apostle can only mean that while each individual disciple has communion with Christ in the sense already described, he has also communion with his brethren. Thus the term "Communion," so often applied to the Supper, becomes laden with a double significance. On the one hand it reminds us that the Supper is so called because we each participate in Christ. On the other, it teaches us that it may wear this name, because we therein share with one another family blessings, affections, and obligations, which are inspired by Him. This community in turn only manifests, and so emphasises, a principle that ought to be carried into all the Christian life. "The bread which we break is it not a communion of the body of Christ? seeing that we, who are many, are one bread, one body; for we all partake of the one bread:" or, to put the meaning of this last clause yet more precisely, "For there is one bread" (that is, one great blessing of fellowship with

[1] John xiii. 34, 35. [2] 1 Cor. x. 16.

the crucified Lord, which we all share), "and" (as a consequence and accompaniment of this) "one body we many" (though we be) "are" (by this very participation): for of the one bread (or loaf) we all partake.[1]

Here therefore, also, the Supper is set before us as an *incorporative* ordinance: in other words, as a means of completing our union with the whole society of which Christ is the exalted Head. This, of course, is so far effected in the sacrament of Baptism. As administered by the Lord, and as truly realised by faith, this initiatory rite binds the disciple both to Christ and Christ's people. But this union is always regarded as consummated only in the participation of the Supper. To partake of food in connection with religious service was looked on by Paul as equivalent to being identified with the special form of religion practised, and with all who observed it. This was the ground on which he addressed to the Corinthians the stern call to have done with idolatrous feasts. These they were ordered to shun because, by partaking of the Supper, they had already been bound up in the bundle of life with Christ, and with all who had confessed His name. The baptized disciple, therefore, who does not receive the Supper may be indeed a true Christian, but he is not so fully identified with the whole body of Christ on earth as he might be and ought to be.

These are truths not for one century of the Church's

[1] 1 Cor. x. 17. Cf. Edwards, *in loc.*

history, but for all time; not for one nation only, but for all the world. By the very fact of their partaking of the Supper together, Christians of different climes and different tribes still show forth their unity as brethren of the Divine household of faith; and so they become pledged to love one another. The soldier who took the Roman "sacramentum" pledged himself to be true to his comrades as well as to his leader. So do fellow-Christians in like manner become united together in a league of mutual holy love and service. Writing to Corinth about the liberality of the Macedonian disciples, Paul said, "They gave of their own accord . . . and this, not as we had hoped, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord, and to us by will of God."[1] This twofold self-surrender is manifested and expected in the Supper still. Says the world, in the pride and selfishness of Cain, "Am I my brother's keeper?" Says the Church, around the table of the Lord, "We are our brethren's keepers;" "we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren."

5. This, accordingly, leads us to the last special purpose of the Supper, namely, *thanksgiving*. In explaining the nature of the Supper we were careful to guard against the idea that the participation of the elements was in itself only an act of worship. But it was far from our intention to convey the impression that the celebration of the Supper did not afford a

[1] 2 Cor. viii. 5.

rich opportunity of worship in its very highest forms. This must ever be kept in view. Worship enters on its noblest phase when, under the sense of blessing from God, the soul yields itself to Him in adoration and thanksgiving. It is one of the distinctive functions of the Supper that it has been so framed as to fall in with this principle. For while it is an abiding means of receiving grace from the Lord, the whole mode of its celebration enables it to become a channel for rendering to Him in return the sacrifice of the life, and, as an expression of this, a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make confession to His name.

This feature the Supper may be said to have heired from the Passover. A glance at the ritual of the Paschal Feast, as already described, is sufficient to show that this was a prominent element in all the services. At every new turn of the celebration special prayers were uttered, in which thanks were offered to God for all His mercy. It is also expressly mentioned that Jesus instituted the Supper itself in connection with special acts of thanksgiving, as well as benediction or prayer for blessing on the elements to be used; while towards the beginning, as also at the close of the service, hymns of praise to the Lord were solemnly sung. This example was doubtless intended to be binding on the Church in all coming time. Unless due prominence be assigned to the giving of thanks, the Supper is shorn of much of its charm and power.

For what particular blessings this thanksgiving ought to be rendered, it is not anywhere expressly said. The thanksgiving prayers of the Jews in the Paschal Feast took a very wide range, embracing allusions to all the providential as well as spiritual blessings of which the Lord had made them partakers. In giving thanks at the Supper, it is quite in keeping with the whole design of the ordinance to make a similar survey. Naturally the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, as fully accomplished by His death and resurrection and now being carried out in the souls of men by the Holy Spirit, holds the central place. But round this all other benefits we have may be grouped. We may then also well thank God for our creation, for the forbearance He has shown to the whole race, for all the providential blessings with which He has supplied our need, for His electing love, for the Supper itself as a token of it, for the brethren around the table, and the hope of winning the whole world to the Divine sway. In short, the whole service, in all its accompaniments of praise and prayer and reading and preaching of the word, should be instinct with the spirit of holy thanksgiving and adoration. Proclamation of the Cross is good; so is silent practical confession of the Lord and reception of His grace; but the Lord desires also that offering of praise by which He is specially glorified; and we should hail the Supper as a means of yielding it to Him, in hearts brimming with gratitude and love.

How truly this design of the Supper commends itself to the Christian conscience is manifest from a name which was used by the Church of the earliest centuries, and the wide acceptance of it up to this day. To the disciples of the primitive Church, the Supper was "the Eucharist," or thanksgiving, as if this were the crowning feature of the whole ordinance, and the act on the part of the guests at the table, in which the service culminated. By the disciples of later days even the public address, which preceded the distribution of the elements, was also brought under the sweep of this idea: it was called the "action" sermon, because it was the sermon preparatory to the "*actio gratiarum*," or giving of thanks.

On the whole, therefore, this is a feature of the Supper which ministers and people would do well to give more heed to. In not a few branches of the Church, and at certain times in nearly all churches, there has been a marked tendency to give prominence to the necessity of humiliation for sin in those who partake of the Supper. And true it is that this can never be set aside. The very event which the Supper proclaims suggests the exceeding sinfulness of sin; for had sin not been an evil and a bitter thing, there had been no necessity for the death of the Lord of glory. A service where this "exercise" receives its due place seems an indispensable accompaniment of a full spiritual observance of the Supper. But it is quite

in opposition to the spirit of the ordinance to give penitential feelings the upper hand in the midst of its actual celebration and reception. Even the sadder memories of the Passover were to be toned down by the gladness associated with the addition of the cup of wine. And since there are no bitter herbs in the Supper, but only the bread and wine of a joyful deliverance, the children of God are not then to write bitter things against themselves, but rather, in conscious oneness with a victorious Leader, to praise God for His loving-kindness and His truth. This gratitude, in turn, is sure to bring fuller blessing. Thanksgiving has always been a prelude of more grace. When the priests of old sang the praises of the Most High at the dedication of the temple, saying, "For He is good; for His mercy endureth for ever," the glory of the Lord swept down upon them and filled the whole house. And when the children of God still surround the table, with hearts on fire with adoring love, the joy of the Lord is sure to be fulfilled in them, and that joy will be their strength.

CHAPTER IX.

The Circle for which the Supper was intended.

"Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers: for what fellowship have righteousness and iniquity? or what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what portion hath a believer with an unbeliever?" If this passage be applicable to anything it must be applicable to the connection of believers and unbelievers in this ordinance. There is an unseemliness and incongruity in this mixture which must strike any thinking individual. There can be no communion, though there may be mixture and juxtaposition. The iron and clay may be joined together, but they will never amalgamate. Without faith in the blood of Christ there can be no communion with Him, and no fellowship of spirit with His people.

W. Orme.

CHAPTER IX.

THE CIRCLE FOR WHICH THE SUPPER WAS INTENDED—THE QUALIFICATIONS EXPECTED OF THOSE WHO APPLY FOR ADMISSION TO IT.

IF we were to take the narrowest view of the subject prescribed to us in these pages, we might now consider our task well-nigh finished. For with the examination of the special purposes of the Supper, and the way these are reflected in the names it bears, the ordinance has been surveyed on every side directly insisted on in the New Testament. Yet there are several other points which it is necessary to advert to, in order that we may complete our view. These are such as the persons for whose use the Supper was intended by the Lord who instituted it, the qualifications which the Christian society has a right to require of those who, through it, desire to enter into full communion with the Church, the spirit in which the ordinance should be used, and the specific obligations which participation in it continually involves. On some of these topics we have utterances in the New Testament which only need to be stated and developed;

for others, where the evidence is not such as can be directly appealed to, we find principles laid down which we are called upon to apply to them in detail. An exposition which carries out this method may still justly claim to be Biblical; for, according to a very high authority, Scripture must be held to teach, not only that which is "expressly set down in it," but also all that "by good and necessary consequence may be deduced" therefrom.

Starting with the first of the points just named—the circle for which the Lord's Supper was designed—we are justified in stating at the outset that it was intended by the Lord Himself only for His true disciples. On this the teaching of the New Testament is very explicit. The Passover was instituted for the families of Israel, and every one who had duly come under the bonds of the National Covenant was permitted as well as expected to take part in it. But the Christian community was not marked off by any such visible limits. Connection with it was determined solely by the attitude which the individual soul took up towards Jesus as his Lord and Master. And hence admission to the ordinance, which most distinctly expresses and crowns full membership in the society, must also be regulated by the same law. It is only therefore what might have been expected when we find Jesus making such arrangements for the celebration of the first communion as would admit of none but His own disciples taking part in it. He did not,

indeed, invite all the disciples He had in Palestine at that time to come to the Supper. That was not necessary as long as the Christian Church was not formally separated and inaugurated; and, besides, the very circumstances in which the Passover was celebrated in the families of the nation, as well as the whole way in which the Supper itself was to be instituted, rendered this impracticable. But, as a matter of fact, it was only those who had joined His cause, through a professed attachment to Himself, that were then present at the Supper. And, in the course of the address then given, this distinctive feature in their personal relations to Him is kept prominently in view. He took it for granted that those to whom He distributed the symbols of His body and blood were personally partakers of eternal life with Him. The injunction to observe the ordinance "in remembrance" of Him, the frequently repeated counsels to trust, obey, love, follow, and abide in Him, and the benefits and rewards which were to follow this attitude, all assume that only those who are vitally and spiritually members of the kingdom of heaven could take part in the Supper or derive any blessing from it.

Accordingly, the same principle is kept in view in the great commission which the Lord gave to the apostles before ascending into heaven. The first great duty laid upon them was to make disciples of all nations; and only when this great preliminary condition had been realised were they set free to teach

them to observe all things—and the Supper with the rest—that He had commanded them.[1] This injunction was scrupulously obeyed. At Jerusalem it was only those who through repentance and faith had been baptized into the name of Jesus that continued steadfastly in the breaking of bread. It was evidently in the company of disciples only that the Supper was dispensed at Troas.[2] And when in the only epistle that formally deals with the Supper, Paul comes to write about certain abuses that had crept into the administration of it, the very arguments he employs for their guidance assume that those who partake of the Supper are to be men in Christ. The use of the Lord's cup, he contends, spiritually identifies the communicants with Him, as idolatry identifies the devotees with their idols.

Here, then, we find a principle that ought to govern the conscience and guide the conduct of men in all ages. The Lord and His apostles welcomed none to the table but such as professed to be disciples of the Master. And this means, that none but those who are truly disciples are entitled to go forward and partake of it. Nor can there be any doubt of the meaning which discipleship in the New Testament really carries in it. No mere inquirer into the truths or claims of Christianity is thereby a disciple. Nor can one rightfully bear this name who simply takes up towards the Lord Jesus an attitude of respect or

[1] Matt. xxviii. 19. [2] Acts xx. 7.

admiration; no more can he who has merely cut off some besetting sins and set his face towards a higher life. A Christian disciple is one who has been born from above, through personal trust in Jesus as a Saviour from sin wrought in his heart by the Holy Spirit, and who, in the strength of this grace, is prepared to deny himself and take up his cross daily, and follow the Lord fully. A true disciple, in short, is a child of God: and he bears the name of Christian, not because he is connected with a Christian family, but because he has become vitally united to Christ, and lives in Him, and walks with Him as his Divine Friend. It is only such disciples as these that can realise in their own experience the more general or specific purposes of the Supper; and it is these only that can warrantably aspire to the privilege of partaking of it.

From all this it flows that where Christianity has been accepted and the Gospel is preached, and the ordinances of the Church constantly dispensed, the chief responsibility for going forward to the table of the Lord rests with individual souls. The question as to whether they ought on any occasion to partake of the Supper is, in the last resort, to be settled by men themselves, betwixt God and their own conscience. The Lord has left us in no doubt as to the circle for which the Supper is intended, and it remains for each one to decide, on the proper evidence, as to whether he belongs to that circle, or still lives outside of it. By the decision he comes to, his conduct ought

to be governed. If, in his own consciousness, he is not in heart and character like those for whom the Supper was divinely framed, it is an unjustifiable step for him to partake of it. But if he be, as in the sight of God, persuaded that he does belong to the Divine family, it is as much his duty as his privilege to obey the Master's injunction, "Do this in remembrance of me," and to go forward joyfully to the table.

On the special kind of evidence concerning his connection with Christ, which a man ought to have ere he can be fully persuaded of his right to participate in the Supper, the New Testament gives a decisive testimony. The chief point to which the apostolic teaching directs our attention is the question whether we are living in faith: "But let a man prove himself, and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup;"[1] or, to take the fuller form of the same counsel, "Try your own selves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Or know ye not as to your own selves, that Jesus Christ is in you? unless indeed ye be reprobate."[2] This means, not simply that men are to try and discover whether they are trusting in Christ by looking into their hearts for the act or habit of faith itself—though this may be graciously discovered to them by the direct witness of the Spirit of adoption—but rather whether they live in a fitting attitude towards Christ, and whether their faith is of such a kind as to have proved its reality in bringing

[1] Cor. xi. 28. [2] 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

forth the fruits it will inevitably produce where it has been implanted in the heart by the Holy Spirit.

This turns the attention of the soul, in the first instance, to what Christ is, and to what He has done and is bent on doing, in those that trust Him. The Gospel sets Christ before every man as the Son of God, the Messenger of the Father, as the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world, and as the living Lord who must reign in every soul that owns His sway, till He hath subdued it wholly to Himself. Each man who would be an acceptable guest at the table must begin by asking himself whether Christ, as thus revealed, has been truly acceptable to him: "Have I accepted Christ as the Teacher sent from God, and as Himself the Son of God's love given for sinners? Have I come under the power of the cleansing blood, and had my sins washed away? And am I now alike departing from all iniquity, and yielding myself unto Him as one alive from the dead?" These are the first questions which every earnest soul must face. But, as he revolves them in his spirit, he will also find his thoughts turned to his inward dispositions and spiritual habits and whole outward conduct. True faith works by love, and love brings in its train "joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance."[1] Where these dispositions and this kind of conduct are present in a man's character and life, to a greater or less degree, he is not

[1] Gal. vi. 22.

at liberty to doubt as to whether he be a true disciple: he must be a Christian indeed, for these are the fruits of the Spirit of Christ dwelling in the heart. But where such an attitude towards Christ, and such fruits as these are after a sincere self-scrutiny not to be found, even in a rudimentary stage of growth, a man has no stable ground for regarding himself as a disciple of Christ or a child of the Kingdom; and has, consequently, no adequate reason for considering himself entitled to partake of the Supper. This is evidently the teaching of the New Testament on the Divine intention in this ordinance. And no Church can be held to be discharging her duty as a witness for Christ that does not give these truths a prominent place in her testimony.

At this point, however, the question may be raised, Is it then to be assumed that no one is at liberty to go forward and take part in the Supper who is not fully assured in his own mind that he is a believer in Christ? Suppose that a man, after searching in a Scriptural method for the proper evidence of his being a true disciple of Christ, should be left in doubt as to his real state before God, what is his duty in such a case? Ought he to keep back from the Supper, or go forward to it? In reply to this question, it must be said at once that we have no particular statements in the New Testament which deal with this point: it is nowhere expressly alluded to. Yet have we set forth, in other connections, principles which leave no room

for hesitation as to the answer that should be given. It is frequently assumed in Scripture that a really sincere faith may be so accompanied and clouded by doubts as to become weak and uncertain. Under the apostles' preaching, this was far from being the normal experience. Their method of dealing with their hearers was so persuasive, the co-witness of the Spirit vouchsafed to them was so mighty, the whole circumstances in which the cause of Christ was placed were so favourable for making faith, where it existed at all, firm and decided, that nearly all of those who became disciples, not only had faith, but were directly conscious of it. And the apostles, in writing to the Churches, could take it for granted, as the ordinary experience, that their brethren knew in whom they had believed, and were fully persuaded that they were being saved in Christ. Yet there are passages in the Epistles which show that, owing to special circumstances connected with their previous religious nurture and education, there were in several Churches—as, for example,[1] Rome, Corinth, and Galatia—many disciples who were weak in the faith, encompassed with infirmities, ready to fall over stumbling-blocks, and even wavering before temptations to apostasy. And many such disciples are to be found in the Christian Churches still. Whether the failure arises from the less effective preaching of the Gospel in our day, or the

[1] Rom. xiv. 1; Rom. xv. 1; 1 Cor. viii. 9; 1 Thess. iii. 5; Gal. iii. 3; Heb. x. 23.

less manifest operation of the Spirit on account of sin, or from the greater facility with which the profession of Christianity can be entered on and maintained, or from the less complete self-surrender to the Lord with which they are content, certain it is that full assurance of faith on the part of disciples is now a much less common attainment than in the first days of the Gospel. Yet the apostolic precepts, concerning the way in which the "weak in faith" are to be dealt with, make it plain that those who seem to have the like defect now are not to be unceremoniously thrust aside from the privileges of full communion. They are to be treated tenderly, and warned or encouraged, as their case seems to require. In such instances everything depends on the manner in which individuals are affected by the doubt as to whether they are in the faith—that is, in Christ or not. If a man can take his doubt very lightly, not regarding it as a serious drawback to his peace and usefulness, never humbling himself on account of it, never by study or prayer or earnest converse with friends of mature experience trying to shake it off and so enter into fuller life and liberty, there is grave reason to fear that the doubt he is resting under is simply that of an inquirer, and not a regenerate disciple. But it often occurs that a man who is in doubt about his vital union with Christ is greatly distressed at the thought of it, is earnestly desiring to have a full-orbed faith, and a heart enlarged by a conscious reception of the Spirit

of adoption, and is eagerly using all the approved means of solving his difficulties and dispersing the clouds that overhang his spirit. In such a case, and especially where there is reason to think that the doubt is not unconnected with special features of mental or moral temperament, a man should be taught to believe that beneath the distressing doubt there does exist a genuine faith, and should be encouraged to come forward to the table to receive more of the grace that is in Christ Jesus, that his faith, such as it is, may be confirmed, the obstacles in the path of its progress discovered and removed, and his whole spiritual nature sanctified and ennobled. "Him that is weak in the faith receive ye;"[1] "Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves."[2]

The whole question of the circle for which the Lord's Supper was designed, however, evidently opens out into another closely connected with it—namely, that concerning the qualifications which ought to be required of those who apply for admission to it for the first time. It has been said that, in every community where the ordinances of the Church are celebrated, it is her bounden duty to teach for whom alone the Supper was divinely intended. But this, it is plain, does not exhaust the duty of the people of Christ in these circumstances. In every living flock there is continually growing up a large number of

[1] Rom. xiv. 1. [2] Rom. xv. 1; Cf. Isa. l. 10.

young persons, who, though actually members of the visible Church in virtue of their connection with Christian parents, have not yet been admitted into all the benefits of fellowship. With respect to these also, the office-bearers of the Church have a responsibility to meet and a duty to discharge. On the one hand, they are to encourage all such adherents of the Church to look forward to the privilege of partaking of the Supper. This expectation they are bound to insist on as the natural order of things, and indeed as the only method by which they can manifestly assume that obligation to join the cause of Christ which was, so far, originally resting in their behalf on their parents. And, on the other hand, when those adherents present themselves as candidates desirous of entering into full communion,—as will always be the case where Christian ministers and heads of families are awake to their duty,—they are equally bound to exercise a wise oversight of their admission. In other words, the office-bearers of the Church are bound to see that those who desire to become members in full communion have, so far as the Church is entitled to judge, the qualifications necessary for assuming that position.

That this principle is everywhere accepted, it would be rash to say. We have not to look very far into the field of current religious literature without coming across writers who call in question the right of the office-bearers of a Church to exercise any direct scrutiny of candidates for admission into her communion. Says

a prominent Congregationalist minister of our day, "It has been said the act of entering the Church has been regarded as a transaction between man and man, whereas is it not entirely a transaction between the spirit and Jesus Christ? Take an illustration: in some places the approach to the table of communion, or the Lord's Supper, is considered as the sign of church membership; but, before that table can be approached, the intending communicant must undergo some kind of official examination as to his theological views. Where is Christ's authority for this? Does not such an inquiry proceed upon the principle that the Lord's Supper is an administration rather than a communion—something to be dispensed by a superior hand rather than taken with a trembling joy by the man himself? In *such* a service who could be elevated to the dignity of an administrator?"[1] As has been already pointed out, in the beginning of this chapter, the whole current of Scripture testimony on the nature and relations of the Church is against this view. That there should be examination of those who apply for admission to the privilege of full communion flows from the very nature of the society in which the privilege is enjoyed. Every separate organised community has the right to determine on what conditions men shall become members of it. This indeed is essential, alike to its existence and its orderly action. And office-bearers are appointed for the express purpose of seeing to it that these con-

[1] Dr. Joseph Parker in *Ecce Deus*, p. 141 (third edition).

ditions are in each instance complied with. In the case of the Church, this function has been granted and confirmed by her supreme Office-Bearer, the exalted Christ. When He was dealing on earth with those who applied to Him for cure and help, He, as a rule, made strict inquiries concerning their attitude to God or to Himself, oftentimes delaying to confer the boon till an acknowledgment of this was made; in one case, specially requiring it after the blessing had been imparted. This was His way of showing that His Church was not to be of the world, even as He was not of the world. It was under His sanction, too, that at baptism every new candidate had to make personal acknowledgment of trust in Him, in presence of the apostles or those who succeeded them. These facts—especially when viewed in connection with the power of discipline or excommunication expressly conferred by the Lord—are of themselves sufficient to warrant the office-bearers of a Church in making entrance into the distinctive ordinances of Christianity an occasion for bringing each applicant face to face with the leading features which ought to mark his Christian belief and character. Where baptism has not been received in infancy, this duty will be fulfilled in connection with its reception in later life. Where infant baptism is practised, it will fall to be discharged in connection with admission to the Lord's table. In no sense does this mar the real character of the Supper as a communion with Christ. He continues to be the only

true Administrator of the ordinance, while those who dispense it are simply His servants and fellow-communicants with all who sit at the table. Rightly carried out and accepted, the preliminary conference with candidates only helps to put their spirit into the attitude in which they can best meet with Christ, and heart to heart with Him alone, receive His richest blessing.

Accordingly, it becomes a very important matter for the office-bearers of the Church to be able to ascertain and state what the qualifications they have a right at this stage to insist on, precisely are. From what has been already said about the divine intention of the ordinance, we might be ready to conclude that the main business of a living Church ought to be to try and discover whether those who desire to be in full communion are true children of God. The Supper was designed by the Lord for regenerate disciples, it might be argued; and no Church can be fulfilling her duty that does not use every suitable means within her power for coming to a decision whether those that apply for admission have been really born from above or not. Such in fact is the position on this point which many Churches have taken up in past times, and that not a few maintain still. A Church, it is contended, ought to be thoroughly pure, and should consist only of believers; and if her office-bearers discharge their duty aright, this purity may be attained. Into the discussion of the larger assumption here made, it is not necessary to enter. But it must be said at once that the work

thus laid on the office-bearers of the Church is such as they cannot possibly carry out, and indeed have no right to attempt. "The Lord knoweth them that are His," for He searcheth the hearts and tries the reins of the children of men. But whatever be the evidence laid before them, men have not the power of pronouncing, in any case, whether a soul is regenerate or not; and if they but knew what a responsibility the profession of power or liberty to come to such a decision involved, they might well shrink from assuming it. This whole region is open only to the eye of the Lord and the conscience of the individual soul. In the settlement of this aspect of the question the chief responsibility must rest with the applicant himself.

By no means, however, does it follow from this that there is nothing which the office-bearers of the Church can do that is practically effective for ascertaining the fitness of applicants to become members of the Church. Betwixt the two extremes we have noticed there is a valid and Scriptural medium. For if the Church is not called on to raise concerning any applicants for admission the question, "Have they given us sufficient evidence to warrant us in concluding that they are true children of God?" her office-bearers are still at liberty to ask, "Do these applicants, in our charitable judgment, possess the features that, according to the New Testament, are the fitting expression of the qualifications required and known by God?" This, on the face of it, is a position against which no reason-

able objection can be made good, for it involves a test that men have the power and therefore the right to apply. And hence all that is necessary for the office-bearers of the Church is to ascertain from the Word of God what these accompaniments are, and to set about discovering whether they exist in applicants, in a fashion characterised by all the needed tenderness and love.

What these requisite features are may be now simply stated.

1. First in order comes a life outwardly consistent with the nature and precepts of Christianity. No one who is looking forward to full communion with the Church of Christ can regard the use of this test as a hardship. Open transgressors of the law of the Old Covenant were invariably visited with exclusion from the worship and privileges of the congregation. And the same principle was maintained in connection with the Kingdom of Christ. Those who came to join the preparation of John the Baptist had at once to confess their sins and depart from them. When Jesus is guiding the disciples on the method of winning the world, He carefully warns them against indiscriminate giving of sacred privileges to all that might clamour for them; while Paul again and again finds it necessary to set before the Churches the same duty, charging them to purge out the old leaven, to judge those that are within their own pale, to be not unequally yoked with unbelievers, and to withdraw themselves from every brother that walked disorderly.

Such instances are enough to show that the office-bearers are entitled to exercise an oversight of the life of the adherents of the Church, and not to receive at once those that have been guilty of open offences.

2. Along with this comes very naturally the requirement of an adequate knowledge of the Gospel, as set forth in the Scriptures. On this the apostles laid the utmost stress. It was with "the word of the truth of the Gospel" that men who were interested in the new way were at once confronted. If they refused to hear and obey, then they stood without the Church, and were not permitted to partake of her privileges. But if they received it as the Gospel of their salvation, and kept in memory what they learned, then, as those who were being saved, they had the benefit of full communion with the Church set before them. Nothing more is needed to vindicate the right of the office-bearers of a Church to test, after due instruction, how far candidates for admission understand the scope of the Bible and the leading truths of the Gospel.

3. If the Church is summoned to see to it that every applicant understands the Gospel, her office-bearers are manifestly in the path of duty when they also require an adequate knowledge of the nature and purposes of the Supper itself. Betwixt the Gospel and the Supper, indeed, there is such a close connection that it is hardly possible to understand the way

of life without also getting some knowledge of the ordinance. But, as the preceding pages must have shown, there is very much to be learned about its origin, nature, and design; and since this knowledge readily tends to promote both the comfort of the communicant, and the efficiency of the Supper as a means of grace, it is hardly possible for the Church to take too much pains in preparing the successive entrants into her fellowship for this qualification, and in seeing that it at length really exists in them. An adequate discernment of the Lord's body no class of office-bearers can give; but they may well endeavour to take care that there shall be a valid intellectual foundation on which this grace may rest. Nothing could be conceived more likely to prove disastrous to the spiritual life of a flock than the practice of sending forth into all the responsibilities of a Christian profession, troops of young people to whom the Table of the Lord is a mere solemn show, and whose hearts have never been stirred to feel the wealth of truth and love which it exhibits. As well send pilgrims on a far journey through the desert, whose scrips are filled with stones instead of bread, and into whose flasks not a drop of water has ever been poured.

4. It seems beyond question, however, that before actually receiving even those that are found to understand the Gospel and the Supper, the Church is bound to hear from them an explicit acknowledgment of personal trust in Jesus as a Saviour. To this also,

when rightly viewed, it is not possible that an earnest applicant for admission can cherish any valid objection. It is assumed in the older Scriptures that there was no more important duty required of the adherents of the First Covenant than that of "swearing in the name of the Lord:" "Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; and Him shalt thou serve, and swear by (into) His name."[1] And as President Edwards has so well pointed out in his unanswerable treatise on *The Qualifications for Communion*, this fully warrants the Christian Church in requiring a similar confession now. For, to quote the words in which he states his leading position, "This swearing by the name, or into the name of the Lord, is so often and in such a manner spoken of by the prophets as a great duty of God's solemn public worship, as much as praying or sacrificing, that it would be unreasonable to understand it only or chiefly of occasionally taking an oath before a court of judicature, which, it may be, one-tenth part of the people never had occasion to do once in their lives. If we will consider the matter, we shall see abundant reason to be satisfied that the thing intended in the institution was publicly covenanting with God." . . . "There are good evidences that they never had communion in those ordinances which God had appointed as seals of His Covenant, wherein they themselves were to be active, such as their sacrifices,

[1] Deut. x. 20. For a list of similar passages, *vide* Edwards' *Works*, vol. i. p. 441.

etc., till they had done it. It is plainly implied in Ps. l., that it was the manner in Israel vocally to own God's Covenant, or to take it into their mouths, before they sealed that Covenant in their sacrifices. Now, according to the teaching and practice of the apostles, this institution is to be transferred to the Christian Church, as indeed it had been predicted by the prophets would be done.[1] . . . What is here called "swearing," the apostle in citing this place once and again calls "confessing:" "Every tongue shall confess to God;" "That every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," which is the word most commonly used in the New Testament to signify making a public profession of religion. So, "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved: for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation:" where a public confession of religion with the mouth is evidently spoken of as a great duty of all Christ's people, as well as believing in Him. . . . And if explicit, open covenanting with God be a great duty required of all, as has been represented, then it ought to be expected of all persons before they are admitted to the privilege of the adult in the Church of Christ."[2]

It is nowhere implied in these statements that the

[1] Isa. xlv. 22–25. [2] Edwards, *ut supra*, pp. 442, 443.

office-bearers of the Church are bound to require an explicit confession of full assurance of faith on the part of applicants; for if the Supper be open to those that are "weak in faith," one degree of faith cannot be insisted on rather than another. Those who may have doubts concerning their union with Christ before a first participation in the Supper must be dealt with on the same principles as those whose faith may be clouded at a later stage of their course. Far less room is there for supposing that there is the slightest authority given to search into the past spiritual experience of applicants: this whole region must be permitted to rest betwixt God and the soul. Nor is there set forth any one form of confession on which rather than another, liberty is given to insist, such as, "Are you born again?" "Have you been converted?" "Are you a true Christian?" All that is necessary is that the applicant should, in the way that is most natural to him, yet in a way sufficiently explicit, indicate that he has some good reason to believe that he has accepted the exalted Christ as a Divine Saviour, and is going forward to the Table as one who is personally attached to Him. With nothing short of this ought the Church to rest content; for anything less gives no guarantee that the applicant regards the implicit profession which the act of going forward to the Table carries in it, in the same sense as the Church intends. Lovingly requested, and solemnly and sincerely yielded, such a confession serves only to

strengthen and sustain, and so helps in saving the soul.[1]

5. To those who are prepared so to confess Christ, it will be no additional hardship to be required to promise future obedience and allegiance to the Lord in their whole life. This was done again and again in Israel, in connection with their acceptance of the Sinaitic Covenant, and as a preliminary to its being publicly ratified: "All that the Lord hath spoken will we do, and be obedient." Much more readily may it be required in relation to the higher and more spiritual privileges of the New Covenant. In the Supper, the communicant is practically bound over to obey the Lord, and indeed receives it as a help towards obedience. And it is only fitting that he should be asked to say that it is in this attitude, and with a view to meet this obligation, that he goes forward. As in the name of Jesus every tongue ought to confess, so must every knee bow.

That by insisting on these qualifications in applicants for admission to full communion, the Church will always be successful in receiving only those who are true children of God, the teaching of the New Testament nowhere warrants us to expect. Under the administration alike of Jesus and His apostles, this result was not attained; and in their utterances there is much that leads us to suppose that a similar

[1] Cf. W. Orme, *The Lord's Supper*, p. 216. C. Hodge, *Way of Life*, chap. viii. § 3. A. A. Hodge, *Outlines of Theology*, p. 646.

defect will attach to the Church in every age. Yet this yields no liberty to the Church to regard lightly the duty of ascertaining those qualifications she is called on to discover. Rightly conducted, such examination may become—as indeed it most frequently is—a renewed stimulus to strive to enter the strait gate that leadeth into life everlasting.

CHAPTER X.

The Spirit in which the Supper is to be used.

If we have hitherto gone upon sure grounds, with respect to the nature, ends, and uses of the Holy Communion, there can be no doubt made but that so sacred and so salutary an institution ought to be held in great reverence, and to be observed with all joy and thankfulness, tempered with godly fear. . . . There is something of a preparation of heart, mind, and ways required for all religious offices; much more for this, which is the flower and perfection of all.

D. Waterland, D.D.

CHAPTER X.

THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE SUPPER IS TO BE USED.

IF the circle for which the Lord's Supper was designed includes all believers, much will not need to be said to prove that there ought to be a corresponding desire on the part of every one of them to partake of it. The Lord has left us in no doubt of His generous intentions. To true disciples, of every grade and every stage of progress, He has, in contrast with the exclusiveness of the elder dispensation, thrown open the entrances to this fountain of grace. His mercy is here also confirmed by His authority; for He has left a positive injunction to do this "in remembrance" of Him. And, along with the deep sense of gratitude and need that will work in every regenerate soul, the knowledge of this interest in the use of the Supper should furnish an impulse strong enough to make every one long to meet the Lord at His Table.

"Gethsemane can I forget,
Or there Thy conflict see,
Thine agony and bloody sweat,—
And not remember Thee?

"When to the Cross I turn mine eyes,
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my Sacrifice,
I must remember Thee:

"Remember Thee and all Thy pains,
And all Thy love to me:
Yea, while a breath, a pulse remains,
Will I remember Thee."

It should not surprise us to learn, however, that this entire accessibility of the Supper to believers was never meant to set them free to enter upon the use of it at any time they chose, without further deliberation. It is not so with the privileges of ordinary life. Men may feel that they are welcome to enter into certain social gatherings, yet they would never dream of doing so without at the same time making a special effort to go in the right spirit, in the fitting manner, and with becoming outward appearance. Much more obviously must this be the case with a feast which stands consecrated and elevated so far above the level of ordinary meals. As believers we are invited, and indeed commanded, to make use of it; and it is well always so to carry about the dying of the Lord Jesus that we may have in our hearts a subsoil of continued preparedness for participation in it. Yet are there distinct indications in Scripture that, ere we at any time sit down at the sacred Table, we are expected to take special care that the inward man is clothed with the becoming dispositions, and that we are about to use the ordinance in the fitting spirit.

It is this topic, accordingly, that falls to be discussed

here. The general spiritual qualifications for participating in the Supper being assumed to be present, what are the leading features of the spirit we should bring to the table? Or what are the chief dispositions we should have operating in our hearts at that time?

Taking the teaching of Jesus as our guide, we cannot err in saying that the first of these must be *humility*. The exercise of this grace, indeed, is necessary and becoming at all times. As Jesus pointed out in His own matchless way, it is indispensable alike for safety and progress: for safety, because a child of God who goes forward into life without humility is like a soldier who rushes into battle without a helmet; for progress, because he who, in heart at least, takes the lowest place in the midst of his fellow-Christians, is always sure to receive the warmest recognition and the readiest reward at the hand both of Master and disciples. But humility can nowhere be more appropriate than in view of the Supper. Over the table presides Jesus as the Lamb of God, whose blood had to be shed ere one of the guests could be ransomed from death. Around Him gather those on whom this blood has been sprinkled, and who therefore yield themselves to Him as once lost to God and heaven, but now found —once dead in sin, but now, in Christ alive for ever more. Who can survey this wondrous Cross, and Him who died on it and those who are saved by it, without feeling that he ought to count his richest gain loss, and have contempt poured on all his pride? The

very passages of Scripture usually read in connection with the dispensation of the Supper—whether, as in the churches of England, the Ten Commandments, or, as in most Scottish churches, the Beatitudes, and the Fruits of the Spirit, in contrast with the works of the flesh[1]—ought to be heartily welcomed for this end. Hearing them with heart and conscience, we cannot but be convinced that, even as children of the Kingdom, we have fallen into innumerable transgressions and failures. And this feeling should not be eluded, but rather deepened, that, humbling ourselves under God's mighty hand, we may be exalted by Him in due time.

In view of this privilege, however, humility is not more indispensable than *gladness*. The sense of unworthiness which the very saintliest disciple will have in prospect of the Supper, ought never to be fostered in a way or to an extent that might cloud our joy in the privilege itself. Nor, if the humility be of the right kind, will it actually produce this result. Save to the superficial eye there is no real contrariety between self-abasement and the highest spiritual joy. Let the feeling of unworthiness only spring from real trust in the Lord, and there cannot but be joy in prospect of privileges that will then be felt to be both undeserved and unexpected. So should it be with the Supper. If nowhere expressly called "a feast," it has at least taken the place of a feast. The banquet set forth in it is very rich, and

[1] Gal. vi. 13–26.

should be hailed with delight by those who, in spite of their unworthiness and even because of it, are invited to enter and partake. Thanksgiving, we have seen, is a very prominent element in the service of the Supper; and no one can prepare for it aright who does not before the Supper, as well as in it, endeavour to have restored to him the joy of God's salvation, so that he may be upheld with a princely spirit in the midst of the feast.

But where humility and joy are, *love* must also be present. These, indeed, are the very roots out of which love springs. Where a sense of unworthiness, blended with joy in the privileges of the New Covenant, has been implanted in the heart, there must be love to God: for He is then regarded as the supreme Friend of the soul. And there will be love to the brethren, for they then become doubly attractive as partakers of the same privileges. It is little wonder, then, that the active exercise of love should be required in prospect of the communion. To judge from the utterances of Jesus Himself at the first Supper, progress in love is one of the main objects He had in view in instituting it. We may not be justified in saying,[1] that it was of the Supper itself that Jesus said, "A new commandment (or ordinance) I give unto you, That (in order that) ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another."[2] Yet this evidently expresses the whole spirit in which

[1] Cf. Lange, *Life of Jesus*, iii. p. 133 (Clark).
[2] John xiii. 34.

it should be used; as He also said, "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another;"[1] and again, "If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."[2] The presence of this grace in the heart, then, is indispensable. There is in the Supper everything fitted to draw it out. In Christ, the President, we see One who showed the greatest possible love in laying down His life for us all: in the guests we see others who, won by this overmastering affection, are seeking to live in the same spirit. Without love, alike to Him and to them, we should not be in harmony with the essential nature of the whole celebration. For all this comes out in the simple sentence of the apostle, "We love, because He first loved us."

Humility, gladness, and love, are thus seen to be the three primary elements of the spirit in which we should think of approaching the Lord's table. But these graces, where they exist in vigour, give rise in turn to other dispositions, on the presence of which Scripture also indirectly insists.

The first of these is, unquestionably, earnest desire after inward conformity to Christ. Even in the gatherings of ordinary life, the principle prevails that the guests should, to some extent, exhibit their sympathy with the feelings that are supposed to be filling the heart of the host. This is so on the saddest

[1] John xiii. 35. [2] John xiv. 23.

occasions: it also holds true of those that are brighter. A special banquet in the East might require the guests to imitate him who furnished the entertainment, in appearing in white festive robes. The whole character of the Supper demands that in it also this law should be obeyed. For it has this peculiarity, that it is the President who furnishes the feast that is also Himself the substance of it. Of the spiritual blessing offered in the Supper no one can partake heartily who has not first tasted and felt that the Lord is gracious, and thereby become in some measure transformed into His likeness. And the more the feast is partaken of, the stronger becomes the desire to be like Him who presents it. Like other appetites, the longing to have the mind that was in Christ Jesus is intensified by what it feeds on; so that there is no desire of the soul which more readily turns the Supper to the best account than this. Well may it be cherished in connection with the whole ordinance; for it includes all else that a Christian ought to yearn for. It is that longing for holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord; it is that hungering and thirsting after righteousness, which Jesus hails as a mark of true blessedness, and without which we cannot be satisfied with the goodness of God's house, even of His holy place.

But the desire for Christ may assume a more definite form than a simple longing to be like Him. In harmony with what has been already found to be a specific purpose of the Supper, it ought to issue in a

yearning for nearer fellowship with Christ. Like draws to like in every sphere of life. One who in disposition closely resembles a person with whom one is otherwise on terms of friendship, always feels that he is thereby entitled to a greater measure of communion with him. In the kingdom of the Lord this law operates with peculiar force. Feeling that there is none but Christ who can satisfy the heart, persuaded also that the Lord has begun to transform him into His likeness, and knowing that by the Comforter Jesus can still, though absent, enter into the most endearing intercourse with the soul, every true disciple will always crave His intimate spiritual presence.

> "Jesus, these eyes have never seen
> That radiant form of Thine;
> The veil of sense hangs dark between
> Thy blessed face and mine.
> I see Thee not, I hear Thee not,
> Yet art Thou oft with me:
> And earth hath ne'er so dear a spot,
> As where I meet with Thee."

But this desire ought to be specially intense in view of the Lord's Supper. And Scripture affords strong encouragement to hope that it will then be gratified. It was the disciple who was likest his Lord, and had the deepest mental and spiritual affinities with Him that was nearest to Him at the Table. For it is in no spirit of self-exaltation, but only in humility, gladness, and love, that John writes of himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved," and who was "at the table

reclining in Jesus' bosom." Like the whole record of the first communion in the upper room, this fact is intended to be at once a reminder of the necessity of seeking this closer fellowship with Christ at the table, and a promise that from those who seek it, it will never be withheld. Those who are like Jesus will have the same privilege still. As the contemporary of all the ages, the unseen president of every Christian assembly, and the indwelling glory of every Christian heart, Jesus can grant us His presence in its most beneficent and attractive forms. And no one ought to consider that he is duly preparing for the table unless he is earnestly longing that he may see Christ wearing the crown with which the Church of heaven and earth hath crowned Him in the day of the gladness of His heart.

To this it only remains to add that the Lord's Supper ought to be looked forward to as a means and an occasion of spiritual preparation for the life and work that lie immediately before us. What the future hides in it for himself a child of God never knows. It may have in store much that is bright; sooner or later it can hardly fail to prove fruitful in sorrow. In either case, the soul needs a constant preparation for the new scenes to be successively unfolded; and, especially if it has pleased the Father that through much tribulation we should enter the Kingdom, no greater boon could be provided than a channel through which strength and stability could be ministered against such times of need. This, however, is

just what the Supper is designed to give. And while our eyes turn wistfully to the future, it should only be with a greater sharpness of desire that we should seek the presence and power of the Lord at His Table. Jesus Himself had a feeling like this deep in His soul, in view of the last Paschal Feast He was to taste on earth: "With desire have I desired to eat of this Passover with you before I suffer." Through the love of the Father it was to be to Him a source of joy and hope in view of the agony and the cross; and His heart was filled with a vehement longing for the time when He should sit down at the Table with the Twelve. Here, therefore, disciples should still follow their Master, that they in turn may be blessed by Him, even as He was sustained by the loving-kindness of God. This desire for the Supper only shows how closely He is identified with us in the whole range of our human weaknesses, and how well He is able to give us grace and strength for all of life that lies beyond. As one has well said: "It is an everlasting consolation to think of this. The seats which the Lord of the way has made for poor pilgrims to rest upon, and the stores treasured up for weary hearts, have been tried and tested by the Lord Himself, and He knows by experience how to guide their feet to each fitting place: 'He can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way, for that He Himself also was compassed with infirmity.'"[1]

[1] Dr. John Ker, *Sermons* (first series), p. 323.

At this point, however, a very important question emerges. Granted that this is the spirit in which the Supper is to be used, in what way shall it be most readily roused and made dominant in the soul? Admitting that these are the desires that should influence the heart, how shall we bring them into active exercise? Here plainly it will not suffice to trust simply to the impulse of the renewed heart in the prospect of a solemn ordinance. "My soul cleaveth to the dust," said a thoughtful saint of the olden times; and the children of God still have too good reason to sympathise with the utterance. Even in a heart where these dispositions do exist they would, if left alone, be all too languid to make the Supper an occasion of sacred joy and rich refreshing from the presence of the Lord. Special means, therefore, are to be employed for stirring up and forming these desires of the soul, and, as the instinct of every quickened heart at once suggests, first of all, trustful and fervent supplication to the Lord for the indwelling and in-working of the Holy Spirit. When the King who made a marriage feast for His Son invited the guests, He sent to each one a wedding robe that he might appear at the banquet in fitting array. And when we accept the first Gospel invitation to eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man we also, by faith, receive in substance all the spiritual graces that are needed to form the wedding garment of the soul. But it is required of us at the Supper that we should have

this robe manifestly upon us, not shrouded under an outer garment of worldliness or coldness or selfishness, but shining through and over all the soul. Or, to allude to the familiar imagery of the older scriptures, when we were first planted as trees of righteousness in the courts of the Lord's house we had given to us the fragrance of the renewed nature. But when we go to the table, this is not to be kept stored up in our own hearts but rather freely given out in the spirit of her who cried, "Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out."[1] And to get all this preparation, as the last sentence indicates, nothing will avail but renewed, earnest prayer for what our Puritan forefathers called "the vigorous, actuous, operative presence" of the Holy Spirit in our hearts. He alone, sent forth by the Lord, can stir up the dormant graces of the new life and manifestly clothe us in the beauty of holiness; and for His presence, therefore, ceaseless prayer may well be made. For, "if ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your Heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him?"[2]

But prayer itself is all too ready to languish unless it be sustained and directed by suitable accompaniments. The Spirit of grace and supplications is attracted to the soul by other exercises than prayer itself. And to make sure, alike of His presence and

[1] Song of Songs, iv. 16. [2] Luke xi. 13.

His fruits, an energetic use of these also is to be resorted to.

Here then comes in the duty of diligently meditating on the Divine word. There is a very close connection betwixt an increase of spiritual vigour and fervent prayer and the appropriation of the truth. It was when the great lampstand was being lit in the holy place that the incense was burned on the altar; and the light of revelation has ever since been associated with the uprising of earnest desire towards God. One of the psalmists sang, "Let my cry come near before Thee, O Lord: give me understanding according to Thy Word."[1] The same union is seen at the first Supper, when, after having Himself spoken the Divine word to the disciples, Jesus drew them to the footstool of the Father and poured forth the most marvellous prayer that ever fell from human lips. Every intending communicant is bound to follow this example. All those portions of Scripture that set forth so vividly what Jesus has already done for His disciples, those utterances of His own also that exhibit His present oneness and fellowship and sympathy with them, and the very numerous passages in which is depicted to us the rich heritage He is now preparing for His people, ought to be made the subject of tender and devout meditation. And when public opportunities are afforded for hearing such truths sympathetically illustrated and enforced they ought to

[1] Ps. cxix. 169.

be swiftly embraced. The great advantage of this exercise is that it brings us into direct spiritual contact with Christ, as presented in the mirror of His own Word. This tends to increase our faith in Him—is, indeed, the very method of entering into "the full assurance of faith." And everything which makes faith stronger and brighter is sure to give power to prayer, new beauty to every grace that can adorn the soul, and therewith new and higher enjoyment in the Supper.

To get the full benefit of the reading and hearing of God's Word, however, it must be used also for the purpose of guiding the heart aright. Here we fall in again with the line of direct Biblical teaching. From their custom of partaking of the communion, in connection with an ordinary social meal, many of the Corinthian disciples had fallen under the temptation to enter into the sacramental feast heedlessly and without adequate spiritual preparation. The inevitable result was that the value of the ordinance became sadly depreciated, and its whole influence for good greatly marred. To correct this, Paul, in writing his first epistle to them, felt constrained to point out in the most incisive way the grave danger to which this practice exposed them. They were to beware of partaking of the Supper without being at pains to get and renew a right sense of its high spiritual design and signal efficacy and worth when duly observed; for without this they would be held guilty of treating a

most solemn ordinance of the Lord unworthily, and so run the risk of severe chastisement at His hands. "Wherefore, whosoever shall eat the bread or drink the cup of the Lord unworthily,"—that is, not simply without a right estimate of the meaning, nature, and purpose of the ordinance, but, specially, without a deliberate intention to avail himself of the grace and strength it brings to his hand, without any desire to comply with the life and service which participation in it implies, without any purpose of "walking worthily of the Lord unto all pleasing,"[1]—"shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord," that is, of showing irreverence, first to the symbols of His Sacrifice, and then indirectly, yet really, to the Sacrifice itself. "But let a man prove himself,"—discover by actual tests what his inward attitude towards the Crucified is,—"and so let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup," as one in full sympathy with the mind of Christ on the Supper, and so humbled and purified. "For he that eateth and drinketh," in the midst of this holy ordinance, "eateth and drinketh judgment" or judicial chastisement "if he discern not the body," that is, not discriminating, and having neither the heart nor eye to discern, the spiritual power of the sacrifice of Christ and the full provision it has made for his life and service.[2]

The special form of profanation into which the Corinthians fell cannot of course be repeated now,

[1] Col. i. 10. [2] 1 Cor. xi. 27–29.

simply because there is now no starting-point for it. But it is easy to see that beneath the specific warnings of the apostle there runs a counsel which is meant to be binding on Christian disciples of every age. Stated generally, this is of course just the grand duty of awakening within our own hearts the fitting dispositions and desires for turning the Supper to the best account; and the preceding pages have shown in some measure what this direction involves. But as we have indicated there is also another exercise by which the attainment of the result is greatly helped. This is self-examination, or, to use the more precise term, *self-probation.* That he may get a state of mind and heart in full harmony with the nature and design of the Supper, every intending communicant ought, along with prayer for the Spirit and the use of God's Word, to look closely into his own inner life that he may see the precise attitude in which he has been standing and is standing towards the Lord Jesus and His saving grace. This, it is true, is a duty that is incumbent on true disciples at all times; and we have already noticed the form it ought to take in connection with the use of the Supper generally, and especially on first entering into full communion with the Church. But it is needful to notice also the more pointed form it ought to assume in connection with the specific condition insisted on by the apostle here. Before entering into the Supper, every professing disciple is to test himself, especially with respect to

his discernment "of the body." What, precisely, does this mean?

Very diverse answers have been returned to the question. Perhaps the most common view has been to take "body" to refer to the Lord's Supper generally, and to regard the apostle as rebuking those that make no effort to attain an adequate knowledge of the nature and design of the ordinance, and so practically fail to distinguish between the sacred symbols and common bread. This opinion errs in not being sufficiently definite. Neither to "body" nor to "discerning" does it give the specific meaning they are intended to bear. Used absolutely, "body" cannot refer only to the symbols of the Supper, especially in connection with "discerning;" and this last word is not rightly explained by "understanding." It is rather "discriminating," "appreciating," "estimating aright," an idea which includes a process of the heart and conscience, as well as an act of mental apprehension.

From this opinion, accordingly, we find writers tempted to rush to two opposite extremes. One Anglican expositor, for example, has endeavoured to simplify the solution by taking "body" here to refer to the Church, "the body which He has left behind Him on earth in the human race, the Christian society in its members generally;" so that "not discerning the body" comes to mean, "if he does not discern that the body of the Lord is in himself and in the Christian society, if he does not discern in the united loaf the

likeness of the united Christian society."[1] With this view, however, we cannot consent. It is evidently suggested by the previous passage in the apostle's letter,[2] where he is writing, not of the conditions of a right use of the Supper, but only of the results this entails. "Body" here must be taken in a sense congruous with its use in the preceding verses. Feeling the necessity of referring the word to the personal Saviour another recent expositor, following others of an earlier date, takes "body" here to mean "the Lord Himself in His glorified humanity." "He does not now say 'the body and the blood,' because He is speaking, not of the symbols on earth, but of Christ's glorified humanity in heaven. . . . As Ananias and Sapphira fell dead at the feet of Peter, because they lied to the Holy Ghost, so also many Christians at Corinth were stricken with sickness, and some with death, because they had dishonoured the majesty of Christ's glorified human nature."[3] That there is an element of truth in this view, no one will doubt; it is especially right in emphasising the fact that Christ in glory has in Himself still all that He was on earth. Its defect lies in its not taking due account of the sacrifice which Christ then offered and now retains in all its worth and grace. This is distinctly presented in the word "body;" for the apostle having just used

[1] Stanley, *The Epistles to the Corinthians*, p. 203.
[2] 1 Cor. x. 16.
[3] Edwards, *The First Epistle to the Corinthians*, p. 301.

this term in connection with "the blood" to signify the whole atoning life and death of Christ on earth, it was not unnatural for him to concentrate in it alone the fuller meaning expressed by both words together.

What we take to be the true view may now be very briefly stated. "Body" here is simply the whole sacrificial life-work of Christ in its unity. This whole sacrifice is, in the special sense of the word, "exhibited," that is, represented and applied in the Supper; so that our discerning the body must refer to our spiritual appreciation of the necessity and value and blessedness of accepting the sacrificial life and death of the Lord as the means of our own salvation, and of falling in with it as the motive power of our Christian career. The main stress of the apostle's statement falls on this point: "He who eats and drinks at the table eats and drinks judicial chastisement to himself, if he does not appreciate thoroughly the bearing of Christ's reconciliatory sacrifice upon his life and character."

The correctness of this view is still further confirmed by the unity it imparts to the apostle's exhortation, and especially by the way in which it harmonises with the real nature of self-probation. For while the apostle insists on the disciples at Corinth "discerning the body," he also reminds them that they are to "discern"[1] themselves: "But if we discerned" or discriminated—not "judged"—"ourselves, we should

[1] It is the same word that is used in the original Greek (διακρίνω).

not be judged. But when we are judged we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world;"[1] that is, finally condemned with unbelievers. Practically, therefore, "discerning the body" is only another aspect of what is here described as "discerning ourselves." The one exercise inevitably leads into the other. For just as on the one hand it is not the sacrifice of Christ in itself that we are to estimate, but the extent to which this sacrifice is appropriated by the soul and is influencing our whole inner life, so, on the other hand, it cannot be the life of the soul in itself we are to scrutinise but the extent to which it is governed by the Cross. The two duties are but two different aspects of the same obligation. On either view there comes into play the inquiry as to whether we have faith to feed upon Christ, repentance to turn from sin, love to embrace the Lord and His brethren, and earnest desire for that new obedience, which abiding and walking in a risen Saviour implies. And this is truly self-probation. For thus standing by the Cross we occupy a point of view that, like the top of a hill dominating a wide landscape, enables us to survey the whole tenor of our Christian life, and so to conclude whether we are prepared to take part in the Supper in the spirit Christ desires to see operating within us. This duty every faithful disciple is bound to discharge in the light of God's Word, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. And only as each sees

[1] 1 Cor. xi. 31, 32.

that He is in some measure thus estimating "the body" is he at liberty to go forward to the table; just as each disciple who does discover this experience begun or growing, is not only at liberty but bound, in accordance with the Lord's intention and his own desire, to take full advantage of the ordinance.

That an exercise of this kind, conducted in this way, is sure to tell powerfully on faith and prayer and all right preparation for the communion, is obvious at once. One priceless result of it will be that each disciple will be brought face to face with his own sins and shortcomings and infirmities. These he will at once deliver up to be mortified anew in the power of the Spirit. The harbouring of known sin no earnest disciple can for a moment tolerate. And in this view, not more carefully could the Israelites of old search their dwellings for traces of the hidden leaven than Christian communicants should now search their hearts to discover the last remnants of indwelling evil or imperfect self-surrender. But there will also be abasement at the feet of the Lord. In the light of the Cross, every sin is seen in its naked deformity. No child of God who remembers the amount of corruption that exists and works in him alongside the new heart, need be surprised at being overwhelmed with a sense of his own unworthiness. This in itself is no disqualification for the Supper. Worthiness of merit for partaking of the communion we can never have; we can only have the meetness

that springs from a right estimate of the worth and grace of Christ over against our own need. And so far should we be from being repelled from the Supper by the sight of our own defects, that we should only be stirred up to more earnest prayer that the sins which beset us may be put away, and the graces we lack richly supplied. To be finding out by prayerful self-probation before the Supper what we really need from Christ, and to be trusting that this shall be given to us in it, while with unfeigned sorrow for sin we consecrate ourselves anew to Him, is an unfailing method of getting all the holy emotions we should have operating in our hearts, as we survey the prospect of sitting down at the Lord's Table.

And if we thus get beforehand the right spirit in which we are to approach this ordinance of the Lord, there need be no doubt that, in the midst of the communion itself also, we shall be enabled to take up the right attitude towards Him. The great work of introspection and self-probation is then for the time to be laid aside. We go to the table to meet with the Lord amongst His disciples, and with Him alone as the supreme object of faith and hope and love should we be occupied. The King Himself is prepared to direct our thoughts and feelings and affections into the channels that shall best refresh our souls; and we should gladly surrender ourselves to His guidance there and then. Of one privilege we need not hesitate to avail ourselves. Under His kindly

hand the soul is sure to be drawn nearer to Himself, and then is the time to crave what will more than all else satisfy and delight the soul. When Moses had a similar opportunity of fellowship with the Lord, he embraced it by urging the petition, "O Lord, I beseech Thee, show me Thy glory."[1] This should also be our uppermost desire in the midst of the Supper. Let us only look pleadingly to the Lord to manifest Himself to us in the aspect of His character and grace He thinks best to show and we most need to see, and the request will never be turned aside. The Lord Jesus will manifest Himself unto us, and with the Father will make His abode with us. The radiance of His royal countenance we may not behold, for we could not bear it. But He will show us His innermost glory, the glory of His changeless, ever ardent and ever invincible love; and as He moves about in the guest-chamber of our hearts, we shall realise Him to be "full of compassion and gracious, slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and in truth." Only the sight of this glory will do more for us than it did for Moses. We have the best hopes that its lustre shall reach the depths of our hearts and transform us into the same image from glory unto glory, even as by the Lord the Spirit.

[1] Ex. xxxiii. 18.

CHAPTER XI.

The Spirit to be maintained after Communion.

In the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, as it were, is the reservoir; out of it there come the streams that freshen and gladden the piety of daily life. Only remember, not the outward act, but the emotions which it kindles, are the reservoir. Not sitting down there, and taking that cup in your hand, but the deeper glow of feeling which is legitimately kindled then, and the intenser faith which springs therefrom,—these are the fountains which will nourish verdure and life through our dusty days.

A. Maclaren, D.D.

CHAPTER XI.

THE SPIRIT TO BE MAINTAINED AFTER COMMUNION.

THE remark has just been made that in the course of the Supper itself we should be occupied with Christ alone. It is His presence that gives charm and power to the ordinance, and with Him alone should the guests deal, abandoning for the time that work of introspection in which, up to the communion, they had been more or less engaged. The value of this counsel is being continually felt. Christ Himself is the source of all blessing; and the great aim of the communicant must be to bring the soul into contact with Him, as one who goes out for water will try to get the empty vessel into the heart of the flowing spring. When the duty of communicating has been performed, however, there may well be some exercise in the way of reflection on the great privilege and the influence it has exerted on the soul. Just as one who has dipped his pitcher into a stream will naturally turn to see what quantity of water he has secured, so, after having been at pains to prepare aright for the Supper, and having solemnly partaken of it, it

will be one of the first impulses of an earnest soul to look back upon his experience in connection with the ordinance, that he may discover how far he has tasted and seen that the Lord is good. When a communicant has no desire of this kind, or yields to it with reluctance, it is all too likely that either the view taken of the Supper is very superficial, or the preparation for it imperfect, or the use of it unfaithful.

All the more readily should we undertake this duty, since the very nature of the Supper gives us no faint idea of the kind of experience we should have in it. As an appendage to the covenant set forth in the Gospel, the Supper is fitted to suggest and impart saving illumination on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross, His present intercession at God's right hand, His present sympathy with us in life and conflict, as well as His glorious future coming in our behalf. Brought home to the heart, this new insight will in turn give rise to such feelings as gratitude, love, joy, and hope. But since the Supper is also a present channel of grace in the hands of Christ, His blessing will not stop at this point. As bread and wine strengthen and refresh the body, so will Christ Himself, while imparting this light and all that flows from it, also nourish and gladden the soul with His flesh which is meat indeed, and His blood which is drink indeed, making it conscious of being sustained and uplifted by His presence, while it is satisfied with all the goodness of His house. This

grace, if the Lord will, may tell yet more powerfully on our whole spiritual life; for it may lead us secretly, persuasively, and calmly nearer to the full assurance of faith and hope and love and understanding, till, like the nobles of Israel under the cloudless blue of the Divine favour at the communion feast of the Old Covenant, or like John leaning on the Master's breast at Supper, we have given to us the full joy of God's salvation, and are upheld with a willing spirit. To say that this is the blessing quite commonly received in the Supper would be to over-estimate the diligence of ordinary disciples; to deny in any way that it is not often enjoyed would be to do injustice to the grace of the Lord Jesus and the recorded experience of many of His choicest disciples. In the days in which we now live the whole tendency of thought about the Lord's table seems to be towards narrowing rather than enlarging the bounds of expectation concerning the blessing that may be attained in it. But what the apostles prayed for in behalf of their fellow-Christians, rather than the current experience of a materialistic age, ought to furnish us with the standard of expectancy. And their petitions were, "Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that ye may abound in hope through the power of the Holy Ghost;"[1] "Now may the God of peace, that brought again from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep, even our Lord Jesus, fit you

[1] Rom. xv. 13.

in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever."[1] Benedictions like these are in no way specially connected with the Supper: they may be fulfilled progressively across our whole Christian life. But in what one ordinance may the first-fruits of them be more readily looked for and enjoyed than at the table which the Saviour has spread here in the wilderness with His own hand?

Now endeavouring thus, in the light of God's Word and by the help of the Holy Spirit, to discover what their experience at the Supper has actually been, communicants may be led to one or other of these results.

First of all, we may find good reason for concluding that we have obtained a real blessing. When a suppliant goes to the court of a king fully prepared to sue for some boon, and actually obtains his request, he is conscious of the fact. And in like manner, it is very readily conceivable that, having very earnestly set the heart on obtaining blessing from the Lord at the Supper, and pleaded for it there, a disciple of the Lord should have no difficulty in knowing that it was really then bestowed in greater or less measure. Christ is really more closely present to the soul, by faith, than the symbols of the Supper are to the physical senses. He is there to bless and nourish;

[1] Heb. xiii. 20.

and being able also to reach the innermost recesses of the heart by His Holy Spirit, may He not bestow on the souls of any of His people such a measure of help, that they shall be there and then filled with gratitude and joy and hope, and be constrained to say—

> "So have I looked upon Thee in the sanctuary,
> To see Thy power and Thy glory.
> For Thy lovingkindness is better than life,
> My lips shall praise Thee"?[1]

The degree in which the blessing is actually enjoyed will of course depend on what the past spiritual life of the communicant has been, as well as on what it is. If we have early given ourselves to the Lord, and walked closely with Him, growing in faith and love and holiness, and if, in addition to this, we have duly and specially prepared our hearts for the feast, then the higher will the tide of joy and power probably rise. In such a case, the sense of joy and victory is usually progressive. Along the lines of a faithful and holy life the blessing of communion may be as the shining light that shineth brighter and brighter unto the perfect day. Where there has been only a late dedication of the life, maintained with not too much earnestness and success, even though the preparation has not been quite inadequate, there need be no room for surprise that the experience should also be neither so rich nor so equable. As a rule, the blessing received will be according to our faith working by love. Yet, wherever real faith

[1] Ps. lxiii. 2, 3.

exists and gives rise to hungering and thirsting for the living Lord, a soul may well conclude that he has not been sent empty away.

When this is the result attained, the first duty of the communicant is very clear. It is that of thanksgiving and praise to God. No successful suppliant would ever dream of leaving the presence of an earthly monarch without returning thanks for favours bestowed. And no one who has found the Lord's Table to be a channel of guidance and comfort is at liberty to let the hallowed time pass by without giving both private and public thanksgiving to the Lord. Jesus was keenly sensitive about the due performance of this duty when he was blessing men on earth. When, of the ten lepers who were healed one only, a Samaritan, "turned back, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks," He said, in sorrow of heart, "Were not the ten cleansed? but where are the nine? Were there none found that returned to give glory to God, save this stranger?"[1] As He dispenses blessing from the throne on high, He has the same desire for the gratitude of men still. Surely we should be eager to gratify it. Let no one, who at the Supper has had the great process of recovery from sin carried forward within his heart, incur this rebuke. Rather let his thanksgiving rise higher and higher, till it assume the form of adoring praise. A praiseful spirit, at such a time, might be

[1] Luke xvii. 17, 18.

the means of enhancing and perpetuating the blessing itself.

Yet more than gratitude is required. Along with the sacrifice of praise there should be a distinct effort to maintain the feelings of joyful communion that may have been vouchsafed in the Supper. The table itself, we know, must for the time be taken away. It would not be well for us to linger always in the midst of spiritual enjoyments. And therefore, just as Jesus led down the disciples from the mount where they had seen Him transfigured, so must we now expect to descend from the high privilege of the Supper. This may give rise to a passing regret, but it is one that is richly soothed—

> "Too soon we rise: the symbols disappear:
> The feast, though not the love, is past and gone;
> The bread and wine remove, but Thou art here,
> Nearer than ever, still my shield and sun."

These words of the Christian singer remind us that we need not give up the close fellowship with the Saviour that we enjoyed at the table. The very aim of the Supper is so to deepen and strengthen in us the practice of communion with Christ that it shall become a habit of our spiritual life day by day. And if we would use it to this end we must make a special endeavour, in the midst of common duties, still to have the heart resting in the Lord, and enjoying the light of His countenance. Thank God, this is quite practicable. "In the multitude of my thoughts within me, Thy

comforts delight my soul." Only, in the midst of this blessing, there must still be watchfulness. The first Supper had not long been removed when, as often previously, Jesus had to urge the disciples to watch and pray lest they entered into temptation. This counsel is needed still. The higher indeed the tide of happy experience rises, the greater danger is there of the soul being taken at unawares. And no communicant can be safe, unless, while committing himself in well-doing into the hands of a faithful Saviour, he be also preparing to stand fast in the evil day, and having done all things, yet to stand.

It is equally possible, on the other hand, that attendance at the Lord's table may have a sad issue. Looking back on the experience of the Supper and the influence it has exercised, a communicant may be constrained to admit that neither then nor since has he had anything of the joy and enlargement of heart that the ordinance is directly fitted to impart. The truth proclaimed did not bring light and comfort, and the presence of the Master was not consciously welcomed. A result like this, if at all frequent, can only point in the direction of weak faith or positive unbelief; and, in either case, a very heavy responsibility is incurred. In the midst of so much that is favourable to the increase of faith, persistent infirmity can only arise from the lack of earnest prayer to Him who is at once the object and the source of this grace, or from carelessness in service and conflict. And

when such a state of mind and heart is brought to the table, there need be little wonder that no blessing is obtained. Such a communicant may well consider whether he is indeed a true disciple at all. If in his attitude towards Christ, as well as in his character and life, he finds features which will not suffer him to think that he has not savingly accepted Christ, then at least He must hear in the barrenness of His sacramental experience a loud summons to search his heart and try his ways, lest any special sin may have blocked avenues by which blessing might otherwise have reached his heart. If, however, a communicant who has had no blessing finds also that he lacks any other encouragement to think that he has entered into fellowship with the Saviour, then yet more urgent is the call to look well to his soul. For while the guilt of profaning the Supper, by going to it without any spiritual appreciation of Christ, is manifestly very great, yet by incurring this, or the chastisement annexed to it, a man is not thereby liberated from the immediate duty that the Gospel lays upon him. Every unbeliever is bound gratefully to accept an offered Saviour; and the fact of his having been without warrant at the table should only be regarded as an additional incentive to have all sin consciously put away in the blood of the cross.

But it is conceivable that there may be cases in which reflection on the use of the Supper may lead to a result different from any of these already

mentioned. Looking back on his experience at the table, a communicant may feel that he went thither trusting in the Lord, looking and longing only for such blessing as he might well expect the ordinance to give; and yet he may be persuaded that, while not conscious of anything that could entail self-condemnation, he has failed to obtain what he so earnestly desired. This cannot be taken as the ordinary level of experience, or indeed as a form of it at all common. Yet it does not unfrequently occur; and it is often so hard to bear, as well as difficult to understand or deal with, that it cannot be here overlooked. In such a case, the danger is that a true disciple may be tempted to despond concerning his interest in Christ, or otherwise write very bitter things against himself. This is by all means to be avoided. And the best way of doing so, evidently, is for each communicant to be taught that living in the midst of a world where depressing influences of various kinds inevitably act and react on the soul, we find the spiritual experience of enlightenment and joy and peace also readily undergoing the most varied alternations. Unhappy physical condition, for example, may tell adversely on the state of mind and heart, even at the table; so also may innate peculiarities of mental or moral temperament; and especially also any undue sensitiveness to the passing changes of providential environment. Influences like these may singly or collectively do much to repress that

spiritual buoyancy which was so eagerly longed for.

Yet even such considerations as these do not entitle any communicant lightly to pass over his lack of blessing or comfort. There is still room left for close self-scrutiny. It is possible after all that such loss of the light of God's countenance may have arisen from some subtle sin that has not yet been detected and cast out. In that case no effort should be spared to discover and deal with it. It was after the Paschal Feast that the Jews were most careful in searching for the merest traces of leaven in their houses. And this practice should remind us that the lingering elements of corruption should be searched for with equal diligence. A small coin held close enough to the eye will blot out the light of the sun; and even little sins—little, that is, according to man's estimate, though they may be most heinous and dangerous in the sight of God—may be quite large enough to hide Christ from the heart. Such failure to obtain blessing, indeed, may just be the very correction that a disciple needs to make him purify his heart and cleanse his hands. Where a diligent search discloses no such special sin, the conclusion must be that the apparent lack of comfort is sent as a trial of the faith and diligence of the soul. In this case, the proper attitude to take up is that of waiting on the Lord with all earnestness and circumspectness. The promise is that if we draw nigh to God He will draw nigh to us. A real

blessing has doubtless been given; and in due time, if we faint not, it will be fully realised. The best results of the sacrament of baptism often need time to make themselves felt in actual spiritual experience. Just as readily may it be so with the blessing imparted in the Supper. Whilst the soul cleaves to the Lord in trust and fidelity, the grace bestowed will surely rise within its life, unfolding first the blade, then the ear, and then the full corn in the ear.

Nor should a communicant be greatly disappointed if, even in its highest issues, the blessing of the Supper does not assume the shape of exalted feeling and affection. Every soul is not equally capable of this, and should be satisfied with what of it comes, as the Lord wills. Happy as this experience may be, moreover, there may be real joy without it: for the essence of joy lies in the deep, calm sense of fellowship with Christ in His victory over sin. High emotion is not so much a blessing in itself as an accompaniment or result of a deeper benefit. Besides, it always has its dangers. Under its power a keenly susceptible soul may fancy that he is being rapidly transformed, while in truth any extensive victory over indwelling sin is not being won. The tide of affection may run high, and yet the power of conscience in which the fear of God chiefly lies may be at a low ebb. On the whole, therefore, it is well not to under-estimate the visitation of feeling, but at the same time to be content with practical results that make for godliness. The

great aim of the Lord, in giving this ordinance, is that we should be helped thereby to wear His image in life and service. And if divine longings are strengthened, gracious principles imparted, and holy resolutions drawn out, this should suffice to teach us that our communicating has not been in vain in the Lord.

The study of such results as these, however, naturally leads us to consider the whole spirit in which those who have been blessed at the Supper should face their after life. No earnest disciple will suppose that the grace held out to him through this channel has been adequately responded to by a simple review of his past experience. On the contrary, recognising the truly practical aim of the whole ordinance, he will endeavour to let the blessing he may have gotten tell on his whole character and conduct. After Jesus had been on the Mount of Transfiguration He kept the goal of His career more distinctly than ever before His mind. And if, at the table of the Lord, we have had our fellowship with Him lifted up to a higher plane, it must become our aim to maintain that same level in all our subsequent conduct. It is by the careful use of just such increments as these that the habit of holiness is formed, and the cumulative energy of a spirit-filled Christian life developed.

In what special directions the impulse from the blessing of communion may well be expected to show

itself we may now, ere we close this chapter, briefly indicate.

And, first of all, ought not the experience of the Supper to tell powerfully on our whole inner life? The secret of growth and victory here is well understood to be fellowship with the Saviour in laying down His life for us. As Jesus told the disciples at an earlier day, "Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you." It is just this grace, however, that is provided for us at the Lord's table. There and then we are invited to receive Christ anew as the propitiation for our sins before God. There and then also we take His Cross as cutting deep into the carnal nature within us. This full-orbed fellowship with the Crucified, maintained by His Spirit, should thus more than ever be the spring of our whole inner experience, and must, at any cost, become the dominant force of our life. If, at the table, we have given up our sins to be blotted out, then must we turn from them with yet greater abhorrence; if there, also, we have crucified anew the carnal heart, then yet more carefully must we see to it that in detail we mortify its affections and passions. Yet even this obligation is but a step to a higher end. The point on which all our endeavour must converge, is to have Christ dwelling in the heart by faith. This is the secret of a blessed inner life: "Christ in you, the hope of glory."[1] And this also

[1] Col. i. 27.

is given us in the Supper. There specially we welcome Christ into our hearts as at once our Guest and Host, our Friend and Lord. But being there He must reign as well as abide. When the rightful owner of a palace gets possession of it he will cast out every rival, order the whole life of his home, and enrich it with his best resources. Receiving the Lord Jesus more fully at His table, we must suffer Him to banish from our hearts all opposition to His sway, to take the reins of all our desires and emotions into His own hand, and to adorn us with all the graces of the new life. This He will surely do. "For the Lord loveth His people, He will beautify the meek with His salvation."[1]

Then, again, may not the blessing of the communion be expected to tell very helpfully on our whole daily life and service? The characteristics we are to exhibit here are energy and earnestness, coupled with felt subjection to Christ. As the Apostle Paul puts it, we are to be "diligent in business," in our ordinary calling first, and therewith in any work we do for the Church; "fervent in spirit," not stagnant or sluggish, but eager and spirited, through the Spirit welling up in our hearts; and "serving the Lord," that is, doing all we do as Christ's servants, and for His sake who so nobly served us. Such a life requires rich inward sustenance; for, as the homely proverb has it, "It is the food that works the work, and not the long

[1] Ps. cxlix. 4.

day." But it is just as true that, if the needed nutriment be amply supplied, this is the kind of life that should be lived. Such supplies are happily open to faithful disciples every day. Only, they are presented in the most winning form through the medium of the Supper. And again we must say that if, at the table, a communicant has been really fed by the hand of Christ, and with the fulness of His sacrificial grace, then all the more strictly is he bound to show forth, in these practical ways, that he is to live to the Lord that he may die to the Lord, and that living or dying he is the Lord's. In the strength of the food God sent him, Elijah went forward in his journey for many days. And, in like manner, having eaten and drunk in the name of the Lord, we are to face our Christian service, as a bridegroom coming out of his chamber, and rejoicing as a strong man to run a race. That all this can be done without suffering is not to be looked for. We have been forewarned that through much tribulation we must enter into the kingdom. Yet this ordeal only furthers the great end alike of our whole Christian experience and of the Supper itself. It enables us, as it binds us, to go through our appointed course, "always bearing about in the body the dying of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be manifested in our mortal flesh."[1] By this means we learn to know Christ, and "the power of His resurrection, and the

[1] 2 Cor. iv. 10.

fellowship of His sufferings, becoming conformed unto His death."[1] And higher, richer communion than this no disciple can receive; for it leads him directly onwards "to the resurrection from the dead."

Never must it be supposed, however, that the obligations entailed by this ordinance extend only to our individual relationship to the Lord. As the Supper itself is a social meal, bringing us into close connection with others, so ought the grace dispensed there to be manifested along all the lines in which we are brought into contact with our fellow-Christians and our fellow-creatures.

We are called on, for example, to exhibit the influence of blessing received, in our home life. The grand duty expected of us here is subjection to one another in the fear of Christ. Husband and wife, parents and children, brothers and sisters, masters and servants, are to study continually how they may promote the peace and comfort and progress of one another, under the eye and authority and love of the Elder Brother. The Supper is well fitted to promote the growth of this disposition. As one has well said, "It was in its essence nothing else than a prolongation of that Divine and unforgettable communion of daily family life which His followers had kept with the Son of God while He was on earth."[2] This homely character it still retains. And if there, in connection

[1] Phil. iv. 10.

[2] Dykes, *From Jerusalem to Antioch*, p. 107.

with the larger family of God in heaven and earth, we own the sway of the Lord and seek His honour, in our own homes, too, we should propagate the same spirit, remembering these injunctions: "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."[1] "And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."

No less manifestly are we bound over to manifest all access of grace received at the Supper in our relations to the brethren. The spirit in which we are to enter this ordinance we have seen to be, above all, a spirit of love. If we have been in the Spirit on the Lord's Day, however, this grace must have been quickened; for to this end the Spirit of Christ ever works. And this progress must be manifested in the midst of the Church. We are to walk in love, even as Christ also loved us and gave Himself for us an offering and a service to God of a sweet-smelling savour;[2] we are even "to lay down our lives for the brethren."[3] Nor should this Christian love be confined to any narrow circle of friends with whom we happen to be specially intimate. These, indeed, are to be embraced by all with a specially strong affection. And, in particular, those disciples who are admitted into the fellowship of a congregation for the first time, as they themselves should be cordially welcomed, are most obviously bound to take up an attitude of affectionate

[1] 1 Cor. x. 31. [2] Eph. v. 2. [3] 1 John iii. 16.

respect to all within its pale. Every congregation should be a society of loving Christian friends. To cherish the interests of the flock, to love the pastor, to receive the office-bearers, to pay due respect to the judicatories of the congregation, and to enter heartily into all the varied schemes of work in the branch of the Christian Church it is connected with, ought to be the first duty of all who are welcomed into the privileges of full communion. Yet ought there to be no spirit of exclusiveness in these or in any members of a flock. No disciple of the Lord should rest content till he be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth and length and depth and height of the Divine purpose of love to the world as a whole, and so embrace in his sympathy all who under any name among men love the Lord Jesus in sincerity. "Yea, and for this very cause . . . in your love of the brethren . . . supply love;"[1] that larger charity, namely, that, like a new motion in the heart of a lake, sends out a widening circle to greet every one who names the name of Christ, and departs from all iniquity. Here is a sentence well worth pondering: "The Spirit dwells not only in Christ in heaven, but very specially in Christ's body with all its members; and the full healthy action of the Spirit can only be found where the right relation exists between the individual and the whole body, as far as he knows or comes into contact with it."[2]

[1] 2 Pet. i. 5–7. [2] Rev. Andrew Murray, *Spirit of Christ*, p. 294.

Giving effect to this sense of obligation to the brethren, earnest disciples will not be slow to stand up for the interests of the Church in relation to all other earthly societies. Especially will they be ready to cherish a spirit of compassion towards the outlying world. This, it has to be remembered, was the spirit of Jesus at the table. He sat down with the Twelve: but He did not confine His love to them, or the wider circle they represented. Those without also filled a large place in His heart. It was over the whole fallen race of mankind that He yearned, as it was for the whole world He was about to die. And at this hour there is nothing that would better enable Him to see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied, than the sight of men out of every tribe and kindred and tongue sitting down in clusters around His board, and preparing to proclaim His grace over the wide earth. This same spirit of love and compassion, therefore, must every communicant cherish still. "Take this, and divide it among yourselves," said the Saviour, of the bread that was the symbol of His body. Not amongst the brethren alone, but in the field of the world is the spirit of this injunction to be manifested. We are never in full sympathy with Christ at the Supper unless, while holding very precious what of His grace we ourselves have tasted and seen, we have the heart and the will to distribute the same blessings to every creature under heaven. This is the attitude enjoined upon us by the beloved disciple as he closes the

Apocalypse, with heart and eye fixed on the promised advent of the Lord, on the Comforter, and the Church—"The Spirit and the bride say, Come: and let him that heareth say, Come."[1] So should we long for Christ to meet us again. But meanwhile, we must yearn that men themselves should turn to the Lord: "And let him that is athirst come: and whosoever will let him take of the water of life freely." Only, in thus mingling with the world, greater care than ever must be taken that we be not of it—that is, of its spirit. Out of the world we need not expect to be taken. Our presence and service here are to Christ indispensable. But as the Lord prayed that we might be kept from the evil which works so craftily here below, so must we, as the guests of His house, keep ourselves unspotted from the world. We must hold the festival of our whole Christian life, "not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."[2]

Living and growing in this spirit, what may we not have the Supper do for us? Followed up as it ought always to be with prayer and watchfulness and faithful obedience, each successive communion will only place beneath our feet a stepping-stone of our dead selves, on which we may rise to higher things in life and service. Every time the table is spread we shall advance a new stage in the onward march of the

[1] Rev. xxii. 17. [2] 1 Cor. v. 6, 7.

ransomed of the Lord. And at last, we know, the day will dawn when, not through the lattice of any earthly rite, but face to face, we shall see Him who has been the Provider of the Feast, the Substance of it, and the Minister of it all along. So satisfying will the vision of that presence be that we shall willingly let the cup of communion we found so dear on earth merge in the river of the water of life, which flows from the throne of God and of the Lamb—

> "Feast after feast thus comes and passes by,
> Yet, passing, points to the glad Feast above;
> Giving sweet foretaste of the festal joy,
> The Lamb's great bridal feast of bliss and love."

APPENDIX.

Mark xiv. 17, 22–25.[1]	Matt. xxvi. 20, 26–29.
17. And when it was evening, He cometh with the twelve.	20. Now when even was come, He was sitting at meat with the twelve disciples.
22. And as they were eating, He took bread, and when He had blessed, He brake it, and gave to them, and said, Take ye: this is my body.	26. And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and blessed, and brake it; and He gave to the disciples, and said, Take, eat; this is my body.
23. And He took a cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave to them: and they all drank of it.	27. And He took a cup, and gave thanks, and gave to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;
24. And He said unto them, This is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many.	28. For this is my blood of the covenant, which is shed for many unto remission of sins.
25. Verily I say unto you, I will no more drink of the fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God.	29. But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom.
26. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives.	30. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out unto the Mount of Olives.

[1] Cf. Tischendorf's *Synopsis Evangelica;* Abbot and Rushbrooke's, *The Common Tradition of the Synoptic Gospels.*

INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.

LUKE xxii. 14-20.

14. And when the hour was come, He sat down, and the apostles with Him.

15. And He said unto them, With desire I have desired to eat this passover with you before I suffer:

16. For I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

17. And He received a cup, and when He had given thanks. He said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

18. For I say unto you, I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the Kingdom of God shall come.

19. And He took bread, and when He had given thanks, He brake it, and gave unto them, saying.
This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

20. And the cup in like manner after Supper, saying,
This cup is the new covenant in my blood, *even* that which is poured out for you.

1 COR. xi. 23-29.

23. For I received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, how that the Lord Jesus, in the night in which He was betrayed,
took bread;

24. And when He had given thanks, He brake it, and said,
This is my body which is for you: this do in remembrance of me.

25. In like manner also the cup, after Supper, saying,
This cup is the new covenant in my blood: this do, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.

26. For as often as ye eat this bread and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come.

Any one who has read the preceding pages may see at a glance that they do not profess to give in detail the exegetical basis of the results presented. This does not fall within the scope of the task we assigned ourselves. To carry out such a work would require a volume entirely devoted to it, as has been done, for example, by Schulz and Kahnis. Our aim has been rather to seize the fruits of such primary exegesis, and so to group them as to set forth the Biblical doctrine of the Supper in its various relations. Yet, in these days, when so much importance is rightly attached to the language of the individual writers of the Scriptures, it will not be out of place to notice here some points which the exigencies of a readable exposition did not suffer us previously to advert to. The first of these is

I.

THE ORIGINAL ACCOUNTS OF THE INSTITUTION OF THE SUPPER.

These, we have seen, are four in number: the Synoptic Gospels and the First Epistle to the Corinthians. For the sake of convenient reference, we have arranged them in parallel columns on the two preceding pages. In respect of the date of committal to writing, the account of Paul stands first. But as the records of the Gospels represent an earlier tradition than the preaching of the apostle we shall deal with them first.

1. Assuming, at least for our present purpose, that Mark sets forth the primary form of the evangelic tradition, we naturally turn with great interest to the narrative of the institution which he gives (ch. xiv. 22–24). Here we have distinct traces of Mark's characteristic brevity and force. In distributing the bread, Jesus says simply, "Take ye," the actions and

usage of the Passover implying that it was to be eaten. He also notes the promptitude and concord with which the disciples responded to the Master's offer of the cup: "and they all drank of it." In speaking of the blood as poured out, Jesus simply says that it was "for many," without specifying the blessing it confers. The utterance about the new wine of the kingdom is placed at the end of the record. The whole cast of the account is in harmony with the rapidity and insight that might have been expected in the oral teaching of the Apostle Peter, whose catechist and translator Mark doubtless was.

2. On turning to Matthew's narrative (ch. xxvi. 26–29), we are struck at once by its close verbal resemblance to that of Mark. The same place is assigned to the words, "This is my body." The same allusion is made to the blood of the Covenant as poured out "for many." And, similarly with Mark, the account closes with a reference to drinking the new wine of the kingdom. Yet there are more details noticed than in Mark, and these are grouped in the most precise way. Jesus says "eat" as well as "take." There is a special invitation given to all to drink of the wine. And "the blood" is said to be poured out "unto the remission of sins" as well as "for many." This type of narrative accords well with all that we know of Matthew's wider acquaintance with the various cycles of tradition and the manifest facility he had in arranging his materials in the most effective way.

3. As to Luke (chap. xxiii. 19–20), the distinctive feature of his narrative is the indication of the close connection betwixt the Passover and the Supper. The one is seen springing out of the other under our eye. The feelings of Jesus in partaking of the Passover are touchingly noted. The use of the wine in the Paschal Meal is also marked; and with this and not with the Supper is joined the prospect of drinking the new wine

of the kingdom. Such points reveal the historian who, still more than Matthew, had access to different cycles of tradition, and also to shorter written documents. Otherwise, there is a striking resemblance to Mark and Matthew. "This is my body" is again mentioned of the bread, while the cup is still associated, though mediately, with the blood of the Covenant. Yet there are also notable additions. As might have been looked for from one who, being a companion of Paul, so frequently heard the words of invitation rehearsed and applied to new Christian communities as a permanent ordinance of the Church, there are more traces of the direct address than in the other Gospels. The "body" is spoken of as "given for you." There is an express precept to maintain the rite: "This do in remembrance of me." The Covenant, moreover, is called "New," as ushering in a new era in the relations of God to the world. So the cup, that is, the blood, is spoken of directly as "poured out for you."

It is but right to notice here that, as the margin of the Revised Version indicates, "some ancient authorities omit 'which is given for you' . . . 'which is poured out for you.'" Westcott and Hort decide against both of these clauses as a "very early interpolation" (*vide* Greek Testament *in loc.*). Perhaps this may explain the grammatical anomaly of τὸ ἐκχυνόμενον coming after τῷ αἵματι. Winer (*Grammar*, 6th edition, p. 657) somewhat reluctantly admits the possibility of construing this participle with ποτήριον, so referring it to *the contents* of the cup. But this does not acquit the Revised Version of inconsistency in translating this same participle in Matthew by "shed." For it is still the later sacrificial action with the blood that the writer has there in view.

For the rest, the whole form of the narrative is very much what might have been expected from one who was aiming at fulness of historic detail in presenting

the essential features of an ordinance that, springing from a Jewish rite, was soon to be accepted over the wide world.

At this point, however, we are met with a question which, trenching though it does on the province of General Introduction, cannot be here well evaded. The substantial agreement of the evangelists in their accounts of the momentous words used by Jesus in instituting the Supper is very manifest and most welcome. But what, it may be asked, is to be made of the divergences amongst them? The view with which so many are satisfied, to the effect that Jesus may have repeated the words of institution in various forms, and that these were caught by different hearers, is so artificial and improbable that it may be set aside at once. It is barely reverent to assume that the Lord in such a solemn crisis would repeat the words in such different forms and connections. But if this explanation is rejected, what remains?

It is impossible to do justice to the facts of the case, without allowing for the operation of at least three influences in varying the form in which these utterances of the Master are preserved. There was, first of all, the inevitable variation that sprang up in connection with narratives repeated from memory. To this must be added the changes sure to emerge (as in the case of the first two Gospels) in translating from Aramaic into Greek. And with these must go the not inconsiderable divergences which could not but arise from the difference of aim and standpoint that the three writers adopted. All of these influences were at work in moulding the details of the different accounts. And the results we have are such as could be produced only in this way.[1]

[1] So, for example, Rev. A. Wright, *The Composition of the Gospels* (Macmillan), *passim;* and Dr. H. H. Wendt, *Die Lehre Jesu.* Erster Theil ss. 344-345. The latter writer says: "It is interesting that

Does it imperil the inspiration of the Gospels to take this view? Assuredly not. No honest student of the Gospels can doubt for a moment that Scripture does not hang its claim to inspiration on a strict verbal reproduction of the Master's words. The Spirit, under whose guidance and authority the Gospels assumed their present shape, is a Spirit of liberty. And to secure assent to the highest form of inspiration here, it is enough for us to hold that the evangelists exhibit, with indubitable accuracy, the essential words and innermost thoughts of the Master in instituting the Supper. The variations we have seen arose with the permission of the Spirit who worked mightily in the Evangelists while they wrote these narratives, and under the providential watch of the Master. The whole responsibility for them is thus practically assumed by the Lord, whose vice-gerent the Spirit was; and with Him we may well be content to leave it.

4. If anything were needed to reconcile us to this view, it is supplied in the character claimed for his account of the Supper by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor. xi. 23, 24). After reading with due candour all the explanations that have been given of Paul's words in opening his record, we have found it impossible to escape the conviction that he here claims to have received it in a special communication from the Lord Jesus: "For I received[1] of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you." Dr. G. Matheson[2] would refer these words to con-

for all these utterances of Jesus, mentioned by Paul in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, parallels have been handed down in the Evangelic accounts. We have positively no inducement to assume a relation of literary dependence of the Evangelic accounts on Paul, or conversely. Neither, however, are we required to imagine that a single, definitely formulated oral tradition of the first apostles must have been the common source for Paul and the Evangelic accounts. But we may simply say that such characteristic expressions of Jesus could be preserved and recorded independently from different sides."

[1] See Ellicott's very acute grammatical note on the Greek verb.

[2] *The Expositor*, second series, vol. i. p. 433.

victions rooted in Paul's mind in the course of communicating. This view is clearly untenable. For the reception is consonant with the delivery. And since the word for "delivered" evidently embraces the whole following account, so must the reception. Here, therefore, we have a record that, while agreeing in every essential point with the first two Evangelists, is found to reproduce every variation from them that Luke has; and yet the constant delivery of this account has the direct sanction of the glorified Lord. No fact could more plainly demonstrate that to the mind of Christ the strength of the continued claim to inspiration and authority of these narratives is not injured by divergence in verbal details, provided they are accompanied by a manifest essential unity in conception and fact.

On one point Paul is more terse than Luke. For instead of saying, "This is my body which is given for you," he simply adds, "which is for you." So at least the majority of textual critics would have the reading: for Lachmann, Tischendorf, Tregelles, Westcott and Hort, Godet and Ellicott, hold that such witness as ℵ, A, B, C, must here prevail. Godet remarks: "The reading of the Received Text κλώμενον, *broken*, which is found in the Greco-Latin and Byzantine MSS. appears at first sight probable. It is defended by Hofmann. The reading opposed to this has in it something extremely harsh. But is it not probable that it is this very harshness, more tolerable as it is in Aramean than in Greek, which occasioned the interpolation of this participle? It was so natural to draw it from the preceding verb."[1] Ellicott after Bengel adduces, John vi. 51, "where (according to the best reading) ὑπὲρ τῆς τοῦ κόσμου ζωῆς stands in similar grammatical and energetic parallelism."[2]

[1] *Commentaire sur la Prem. Ep. aux Corinthiens*, tome second, p. 165.

[2] *Commentary*, p. 216.

In other respects Paul's account is more comprehensive than Luke's. There is, for example, the emphatic repetition of the injunction to observe the Supper in remembrance of the Lord (vers. 24, 25). And then there is also the sentence which we could so ill have lacked, giving the apostle's own encouragement for all to take part in the Supper: "For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink the cup, ye proclaim the Lord's death till He come." Paul does not quote what Jesus said about this first communion being His last till His second coming. But this sentence seems to point to the apostle's knowledge of that saying.

Another question closely related to the foregoing is

II.

THE RELATION OF JOHN'S GOSPEL TO THE LORD'S SUPPER.

Allusion has already been made to the fact that John gives no detailed narrative of the institution of the Supper. He simply assumes it to have been observed, and then proceeds to give the farewell addresses which Jesus thereafter delivered at the Table. In this course there is nothing that should be a source of perplexity. John wrote his Gospel as an eye-witness, and, had he seen it meet, could easily have narrated the story of the first Communion. But writing after other three cycles of evangelic teaching had begun to assume a definite shape, and knowing, as he must, that in them the facts of the institution had been carefully stated, he did not feel called on to repeat what had been already set forth. For the fourth Gospel is really supplementary to the Synoptists, and, while preserving a manifest unity, is devoted to presenting the higher relations in which Jesus as the incarnate Son moved, and the essential ideas which constitute the permanent force in

His teaching. In such a composition a minute narrative of the Supper did not seem to be called for.

Yet, who that reads this wonderful Scripture can help seeing the predominant influence which all the ideas and principles that are embodied in the Supper exercise on the whole strain of the teaching preserved to us in it?[1] It seems no hyperbole to say that the standpoint of a devout participant in the Supper is that which John occupies from beginning to end of his Gospel. Even the earlier parts of it are pregnant with the leading principles that are illustrated in the ordinance.

This prominence is specially manifest in the record which John alone gives of the discourses at Capernaum (ch. vi.). So directly do the utterances of Jesus seem to bear on the Supper that many expositors have thought that He is here really explaining it. This is not so. But He is certainly dealing with certain aspects of the great truths that underlie it. The Son of Man, he reminds us, is the Son of God incarnate. He comes into the world in the flesh, on a mission of saving grace. This of itself binds men to appreciate Him aright. But He is not merely an incarnate Redeemer. He is to give His life for men, rising again and ascending to heaven with power to impart life to all who will receive it. This exaltation binds men to appropriate Him as the Bread of Life in the depths of their hearts, and so to draw continuously grace and strength from Him that they shall have His cross applied to their needs and His character assimilated and reproduced in their own life and experience. Thus by faith, through the Word and Spirit, they "eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man."

All this, however, is simply presenting for the Christian life generally what is in a more special form concentrated in the faithful and loving participation of the

[1] Cf Westcott, *Gospel of St. John*, p. 113; also Reynolds, *The Monthly Interpreter*, vol. iii. p. 341.

Supper. To one who has learned to see his inner life described in the terms of the earlier discourses, the address at the Table (ch. xiv.–xvi.) becomes instinct with all the highest thoughts and aspirations that the Supper can suggest. We may not grudge or misunderstand the omission of the mere narrative of the Supper when the blank is so well supplied by all that is needful for its best interpretation and enjoyment.

III.

THE PLACE OF THE SUPPER IN THE NEW TESTAMENT AS A WHOLE.

These remarks on the sources of information about the Supper give rise to another which we venture to add, in vindication of the interest we have claimed for the study of this ordinance. By those who are timid over the possibility of the sacraments being made too much of, it is often averred that, after all, the New Testament has really not much to say about the Supper; that, apart from the brief records of its institution, very little notice is taken of it. This is not quite true to fact. But in any case, in the light of the brief review we have just given, the futility of the remark must be evident. As a recent essayist[1] has well pointed out, "This impression certainly ought not to be lasting; for it is due to our forgetfulness of the conditions under which Christianity came into the world, the characteristics and habits of thought with which it had to deal . . . . Amplitude and iteration would indeed have been necessary for any teaching which was to dislodge the sacramental principle out of the minds of those among whom our Lord came—to

[1] Dr. F. Paget on the "Sacraments" in *Lux Mundi*, p. 415. It is almost needless to say that we do not endorse all the opinions of this able paper.

preclude them from seeking the mercy of God through visible means. But if the Divine purpose was not to destroy, but fulfil; not to discredit, as mere misapprehensions, the convictions men had received, but to raise and purify them by disclosing the response which God had prepared for them; to disengage them from that which had been partial, preparatory, transient, and to fasten them on their true satisfaction—then we might reverently expect that the method of this teaching would probably be such as in the New Testament is shown to us in regard to the doctrine of the Sacraments." This view is confirmed, alike by the solemnity of the occasion on which Jesus instituted the Supper, and the calm regal majesty with which he did it. The reiterated narrative of the three Gospels shows that the Supper held a very high place in the recollection and esteem of the disciples. In full concord with their tradition are the impressive terms in which Paul rehearses the same facts and explains the meaning of the ordinance. And when, in addition to this testimony, we remember that the whole Gospel of John—and we might well say his Epistles as well as his Gospel—is really a mirror in which all the varied aspects of the Supper are reflected, we ought to feel that, next to God's Holy Word and alongside it, the Supper must always hold a prominent place in the service of the Church, if the Lord Jesus, its Divine Founder, is to have all the glory that is due to His name.

The last point we have to advert to is—

IV.

THE WAY IN WHICH THE DEATH OF CHRIST IS REFLECTED IN THE SUPPER.

If the acceptance of a view were to be settled by the length of time during which it has prevailed, or the

weight of the names that could be adduced in support of it, the view that the death of Christ is reflected in the breaking of bread in the dispensation of the Supper might well be regarded as set beyond doubt. For this opinion has been held from very early times, and many of the best expositors have been content to stand by it. From Calvin[1] to Turrettine,[2] and from Turrettine to Ebrard,[3] Hodge,[4] and Edwards,[5] the breaking of the bread has been regarded as symbolical of the breaking of Christ's body on the cross. In behalf of the view we have ventured to adopt, and which we have already tried so far to vindicate, hardly any great names can be quoted. With the exception of some scattered notices in theological journals, the utterances of some ministerial friends, and two paragraphs in two really notable books,[6] we have not seen much that can be directly adduced in its behalf. It is certainly, therefore, no favourable outlook that has to be contemplated by one who would maintain the view we have ventured to take. Nevertheless, we consider it an opinion for which valid reasons can be rendered; and, with all deference to the long array of our opponents, we state them anew here in detail.

[1] *First Corinthians* (Calv. Trans. Soc.), p. 381.
[2] *Ins. Theolog.* Loc. xix. Q. 24, sect. vi.
[3] *Christliche Dogmatik*, 2 B. s. 641.
[4] *Systematic Theol.* vol. iii. p. 619.
[5] *First Ep. to Cor.* pp. 256, 292 (2nd ed.).
[6] *An Exposition of the Lord's Supper*, by a Presbyter of the Church of England. pp. 276, 277 (Deighton, Bell, & Co.). *Representative Responsibility*, by Rev. H. Wallace, of Londonderry, p. 219 (Clark). Mr. Wallace, *e.g.*, writes: "The two expressions of our Lord, 'This is my body,' 'This is my blood,' taken together are equivalent to 'This is my death by a violence which shall shed my blood.' And it is a misinterpretation of His act [in breaking the bread] to regard it as significant of His Crucifixion. The whole scene is represented as being subsequent to the Crucifixion, when the body and blood are already separated. . . . 'Giving and receiving bread and wine according to Christ's appointment' is the whole of the ordinance of the Supper." Cf. also Dr. T. S. L. Vogan on *The True Doctrine of the Eucharist*, p. 361; and Delitzsch on *The Epistle to the Hebrews*, Appendix ii. 13.

1. To repeat the historic argument first, we hold it largely in favour of our view that the death of Christ is reflected only in the separation of the bread and wine, that there was no breaking of the body of our Lord. Not a bone of the paschal lamb was broken, either in killing it at first or in carving it afterwards. So was it with the body of Jesus, on the cross: "But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was *dead already*, they break not His legs."[1] It is true, as Turrettine says, that His body was lacerated and wounded in crucifixion. But these indignities do not amount to breaking, for they do not actually reach the snapping of the cord of life.

2. The general character of the Paschal Supper, out of which the Lord's Supper sprang, is also in our favour. No portion of that Supper was directly symbolic of the dying of the coming Substitute. The slaying of the lamb to which this function belonged was carried out in the temple some hours before the Paschal Supper began. Every item on the table was there as prepared food, which had only to be partaken of. So Jesus was slain on the Cross; and the bread and wine which show forth His death are on the Lord's table ready to be simply eaten and drunk.

3. We have every reason to believe that the breaking of the bread in the Lord's Supper had just the same significance that it had in the Passover. In the latter, it was broken simply to be distributed: as the Lord Jesus "brake and gave"[2] in the feeding of the multitude and the repast with the two disciples at Emmaus. In breaking the bread at His own Supper the Lord took a cake that would have otherwise been broken with the ordinary intention in the course of the Paschal meal: the cake, namely, that was called the *aphikomen* or after-dish.[3] The new feature, therefore, was not the

[1] John xix. 33.
[2] Matt. xiv. 19; Luke xxiv. 30.
[3] Edersheim, *The Temple, &c.*, p. 209.

breaking, but the new significance attached to the bread itself.

4. This point is confirmed by the order of the thanksgiving and the breaking. If this action had been intended to represent the Crucifixion, the most natural order would have been, first to break the bread and then give thanks for it as then first becoming food. But, as we are expressly told, the Lord first gave thanks for the bread as already representing prepared spiritual food, and then brake it to show that it was to be shared by all.

5. An additional argument is found in the fact that there is no reference to any outpouring of the wine by the Lord. As Witsius,[1] following Buxtorf, has reminded us, the wine of the Paschal Feast was poured out by the servants of the household, and brought to the table in cups. It was the same wine, already poured out, that the Lord handed round in the cup for His own Supper. But in some respects the outpouring of the wine is more naturally suggestive of the offering up of Christ on the cross than the breaking of the bread. A minister who claimed to break the bread in symbolic representation of the crucifixion might equally well claim to pour out the wine before the congregation. But in our Presbyterian service, at least, this is done by the elders in the session-house—a sure token that, in dealing with this co-ordinate element, no symbolic action is looked for. Why then should it be sought in breaking the bread? Is not the close connection that Paul marks betwixt the breaking and distribution enough? "The bread which we break, is it not *a communion of* (participation in) the body of Christ?"[2]

6. The fragile textual basis for the chief pillar of the older reference must be manifest to every one who has

[1] *The Economy of the Covenants*, Book iv. chap. xvii. § 23.

[2] Since these pages were in print, we have been pleased to find this position briefly but decisively maintained by Dorner, *System of Christian Doctrine*, vol. iv. pp. 308, 309; 311, 312. (Clark.)

read the preceding paragraphs. It is true that if we have not "broken for you," we have "He brake it." Yet it is the former expression that has been at the bottom of the long usage by which the breaking and the crucifixion have been connected; and it is not now received.

Putting all these facts together, we cannot help thinking that the supposed symbolism of the breaking is an excrescence of which the doctrine of the Supper would be well rid. To speak frankly, it seems to us little else than a remnant of Rabbinism, and, in its own place, something like a temptation to sacerdotalism. Assign to a minister the duty of representing what took place on the cross of Christ in one symbolic action, and you open "a little rift within the lute" which only the influence of higher views on the finished work of Christ can prevent becoming an inlet of discord and error. It may be said that our view makes the breaking of bread very prosaic. But there is sufficient symbolism in the Supper without this addition. The simplicity for which we contend is only another proof that it is not in anything man can do in the Supper that its value consists, but only in the wealth of spiritual blessing which the Lord lodges in the hearts of those who partake of it.

INDEX OF TEXTS.

EXODUS.

PAGE

xii., . . . 32
xii. 1, 2, . . 46
xii. 13, . . 39
xii. 14, . . 36
xii. 25, 27, . 36
xii. 27, . . 39
xii. 34, . . 41
xix. 5, 6, . . 90
xx. 19, . 92, 94
xxiii. 18 . . 39
xxiv. 1, 2, . . 93
xxiv. 7, . . 98
xxxiii. 18, . . 285
xxxiv. 24, . . 49
xxxiv. 25, . . 39

LEVITICUS.

xxiii. 7, 8, . 45

DEUTERONOMY.

v. 27, . . 92, 94
x. 20, . . 256

JOSHUA.

v. 11–15, . . 36

2 CHRONICLES.

xxx., . . . 37
xxxv., . . 37

EZRA.

vi. 21, 22, . . 37

PSALMS.

PAGE

xvi. 11, . . 84
lxiii. 2, 3, . . 293
ciii. 3, . . 68
cxvi. 13, . . 51
cxix. 169, . . 275
cxxii. 2, . . 60
cxxv. 2, . . 60
cxxxiii. 1, . . 60
cxlix. 4, . . 303

SONG OF SONGS.

ii. 9, . . . 182
iv. 16, . . 274

ISAIAH.

xlv. 22–25, . . 257
l. 10, . . . 247

JEREMIAH.

xxxi. 31, . . 90
xxxi. 34, . . 109
xxxiv. 19, . . 92

JOEL.

ii. 28, 29, . . 111

HABAKKUK.

ii. 4, . . . 120

MALACHI.

i. 7, . . . 162
i. 7, 12, . . 219

MATTHEW.

PAGE

iii. 5, . . . 58
xiv. 19, . . 325
xvi. 36, . . 141
xx. 29, . . 59
xxvi. 28, . 72, 90
xxvi. 20, 26–29, 312, 315
xxvi. 29, . . 84
xxviii. 19, . . 240

MARK.

x. 46, . . . 59
xiv. 17, 22–25, 312, 314
xiv. 24, . . 89

LUKE.

ix. 16, . . 141
ix. 35, . . 103
xi. 13, . . 274
xii. 50, . . 59
xvii. 17, 18, . 294
xviii. 35, . . 59
xix. 2, . . 59
xxii. 14–20, 313, 315
xxii. 15, . . 59
xxii. 19, . 177, 316
xxii. 20, . . 89
xxiv. 30, 31, 140, 325

JOHN.

i. 29, . . . 53
vi., . . . 321

PAGE

vi. 51, . . 319
vi. 53, . 186, 187
vi. 54, . . 190
xii. 24, . . 188
xii. 26, . . 75
xiii. 34, . . 267
xiii. 34, 35, . 227
xiii. 35, . . 268
xiv.–xvi., . . 322
xiv. 19, . . 82
xiv. 23, . . 268
xix. 33, . . 325
xx. 17, . . 26

ACTS.

i. 3, . . . 145
ii. 42, 46, . . 159
ii. 42–47, . . 144
xii. 12, . . 148
xx. 7, . 159, 240
xxii. 11, . . 148
xxvii. 35, . . 161

ROMANS.

i. 16, . . . 120
vi. 4, . . . 188
xii. 1, . . 224
xiv. 1, . 245, 247
xv. 1, . . 245, 247
xv. 13, . . 291

1 CORINTHIANS.

ii. 14, . . 220
iv. 10, . . 121
v. 6, 7, . . 309
v. 8, . . . 161
viii. 9, . . 245
x. 4, . . . 83
x. 14–22, . . 150
x. 16, . 227, 280, 326
x. 17, . . 228
x. 21, . 219, 220
x. 31, . . 306
xi. 20, . . 219
xi. 23, 24, . 150, 318
xi. 23–29 . . 313
xi. 24, . 175, 319
xi. 26, . . 84
xi. 28, . . 242
xi. 31, 32, . . 282
xv. 7, . . 143

2 CORINTHIANS.

iv. 10, . . 304
viii. 5, . . 229
xiii. 5, . . 242

GALATIANS.

iii. 3, . . . 245
vi. 13–26, . . 243
vi. 22, . . 266

EPHESIANS.

iii. 19, . . 83
v. 2, . . . 306

PHILIPPIANS.

iv. 10, . . 305

COLOSSIANS.

i. 10, . . . 277
i. 27, . . . 302

1 THESSALONIANS.

PAGE

iii. 5, . . . 245

HEBREWS.

viii. 7–13, . . 113
ix. 14, . . 113
ix. 24, . . 116
x. 23, . . 245
xiii. 10, . 161, 219
xiii. 20, . 116, 292

1 TIMOTHY.

iv. 5, . . . 194

1 PETER.

i. 1, 2, . . 117
i. 8, . . . 213

2 PETER.

i. 5–7, . . 307
ii. 13, . . 160

1 JOHN.

iii. 16, . . 306
iv. 17, . . 26

JUDE.

12, . . . 160

REVELATION.

iii. 20, . . 216
vii. 17, . . 85
xix. 9, . . 85
xxii. 17, . . 309

MORRISON AND GIBB, PRINTERS, EDINBURGH.

In crown 8vo, price 1*s.* 6*d.*,

THE CHRISTIAN SACRAMENTS.

By JAMES S. CANDLISH, D.D.,

PROFESSOR OF SYSTEMATIC THEOLOGY IN THE FREE CHURCH COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

'An admirable manual; sound, clear, suggestive, and interesting.'—*Free Church Monthly.*

'It is just such a manual as ministers may with great advantage employ as a text-book in their Bible classes, and as intelligent youth (and intelligent old people too) may with great profit study for themselves.'—*British Messenger.*

'It is an admirable little book, full of material for reflection, and singularly valuable as being representative of what may be termed the generally accepted views of the main subject as held by Protestants.'—*Christian World.*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

In crown 8vo, price 1*s.* 6*d.*,

THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

'A masterly, succinct, and suggestive *résumé* of the highest Christian thought on the personality and office of the Holy Spirit. A finer investigation of the teaching of Scripture, and a more luminous exhibition of its manifold relations to the origination and development of Christian character, we could not desire.'—*Baptist Magazine.*

Recently published, price 4*d.*,

THE CHURCH STANDING OF THE CHILDREN.

By Rev. NORMAN L. WALKER, D.D.,

AUTHOR OF 'SCOTTISH CHURCH HISTORY,' ETC.

'No better contribution has been made in recent years to the discussion of the question of infant baptism. . . . Christian parents should read this little manual, that they may realise the greatness of the trust committed to them. They should put it into the hands of their children, that they may know the name and place they have in the Church and Kingdom of God.'—*United Presbyterian Missionary Record.*

In crown 8vo, price 2*s.* 6*d.*,

A COMMENTARY ON THE SHORTER CATECHISM.

By ALEX. WHYTE, D.D.,

FREE ST. GEORGE'S, EDINBURGH.

'Really good. In every Scotch family this ought to be found. Our English folk are not so well acquainted with "The Shorter Catechism;" but those who are will be glad to have a handbook upon it, so clear, so true, and so lively. . . . Theology of this stamp will do us all good. Scatter it; its leaves are for the healing of the nation. Half-a-crown laid out in this book will purchase no regrets.'—Mr. Spurgeon.

Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 38 George Street.

A NEW AND CHEAPER EDITION.

Just published, in crown 8vo, price 3s. 6d.,

BEYOND THE STARS;

OR,

Heaven, Its Inhabitants, Occupations, and Life.

By THOMAS HAMILTON, D.D.,

PRESIDENT OF QUEEN'S COLLEGE, BELFAST;
AUTHOR OF 'HISTORY OF THE IRISH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH,' ETC. ETC.

CONTENTS:—Chap. I. Introductory.—II. A Settling of Localities.—III. God.—IV. The Cherubim.—V. The Angels.—VI. The Saints.—VII. Children in Heaven.—VIII. Do they know one another in Heaven?—IX. Common Objections to the Doctrine of Recognition in Heaven.—X. Between Death and the Resurrection.—XI. How to get there.

PRESS NOTICES OF THE FIRST EDITION.

'A good book upon a grand subject. . . . His writing is solid, he dissipates dreams, but he establishes authorised hopes. . . . This is a book which a believer will enjoy all the more when he draws nearer to those blessed fields "beyond the stars."'—Mr. Spurgeon in *Sword and Trowel.*

'The work of a man of strong sense and great power of lucid thought and expression, one who has deep springs of tenderness. He puts himself well in touch with his audience, and arranges what he has to say in the clearest manner.'—*British Weekly.*

'The author's natural and sympathetic eloquence lends at times a brightness, and again a more pathetic charm to his theme. We cannot doubt that his book will comfort as well as interest a wide circle of readers.'—*Scottish Leader.*

'Many a bruised heart will be made joyful on reading this book. . . . On a former occasion, when reviewing a book by the same author, we congratulated the Irish Presbyterian Church on having among her younger ministers a writer of such promise and power. We believe we may now congratulate the wider Christian Church on a teacher and guide whose words will fortify and cheer wherever the English language is spoken.'—*Presbyterian Messenger.*

'There is not a dry or uninteresting page in it, and most of the chapters are profoundly absorbing in their style and matter. It reads like a novel, yet there is nothing mawkish or sentimental about it; but it is reverent, devout, frank, manly, and orthodox in its tone and character.'—*Christian Advocate.*

'The tone is reverent, the style is clear, the reasoning is careful. Its capital type will recommend it to the weary sight of some to whom the "land of distances" is no longer the land that is very far off.'—*Church Bells.*

'Dr. Hamilton endeavours to tell in plain and popular language all that the Bible reveals about the other life. The tone of the book is admirable; devout and modest throughout.'—*London Quarterly Review.*

Edinburgh: T. & T. CLARK, 38 George Street.

Just published in crown 8vo, price 5s.,

GETHSEMANE;

OR,

LEAVES OF HEALING FROM THE GARDEN OF GRIEF.

By NEWMAN HALL, LL.B.,

AUTHOR OF 'THE LORD'S PRAYER, A PRACTICAL MEDITATION;' 'COME TO JESUS,' ETC. ETC.

PREFATORY NOTE.—This book is the fulfilment of a long-cherished purpose. It expresses the thoughts and prayers of many years, and is published with devout desire to minister consolation to some of the afflicted children of God.

'Richly laden with consolation for the afflicted children of God; and from the first page to the last it does not strike one false note.'—*Christian Leader.*

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

Now ready, SECOND EDITION, crown 8vo, price 6s.,

THE LORD'S PRAYER:

A Practical Meditation.

CRITICAL NOTICES OF THE FIRST EDITION.

'Its devotional element is robust and practical. The thought is not thin, and the style is clear. Thoroughly readable; enriched by quotations and telling illustrations.'—*The Churchman.*

Dr. THEODORE CUYLER, of Brooklyn, writes:—'His keen and discriminating spiritual insight insures great accuracy, and imparts a priceless value to the work. . . . It is the very book to assist ministers of the gospel in the study of the Model Prayer; it is equally stimulating and quickening to private Christians in their quiet hours of meditation and devotion.'

Mr. C. H SPURGEON writes:—'Evangelical and practical through and through. . . . Many sparkling images and impressive passages adorn the pages; but everywhere practical usefulness has been pursued.'

Dr. REYNOLDS, President of Cheshunt College, writes:—'Not only range but also depth of research. Some of the deepest questions of philosophical theology are discussed with keen insight and admirable temper. Much thought is compressed into small space, and even into few words, which burn oftentimes with white heat.'

'The author's well-known catholicity, evangelical fervour, and firm adherence to evangelical principles, are conspicuous features of this really stimulating and suggestive exposition. An amount of freshness which is wonderful.'—*Christian.*

EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

WORKS BEARING ON THE
LIFE AND PERSON OF CHRIST,

PUBLISHED BY

T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET, EDINBURGH.

Nicoll (W. R., LL.D.)—The Incarnate Saviour: A Life of Jesus Christ. Crown 8vo, 6s.

'It commands my warm sympathy and admiration. I rejoice in the circulation of such a book, which I trust will be the widest possible.'—*Canon Liddon.*

Lange (J. P., D.D.)—The Life of Our Lord Jesus Christ. Edited, with additional Notes, by Prof. MARCUS DODS, D.D. Second Edition, in Four vols. 8vo, Subscription price 28s.

Stalker (Jas., D.D.)—A Life of Christ. Bible Class Handbooks. Crown 8vo, 1s. 6d.; large type Edition, handsomely bound, 3s. 6d.

'As a succinct, suggestive, beautifully written exhibition of the life of our Lord, we are acquainted with nothing that can compare with it.'—*Christian World.*

Naville (Ernest)—The Christ. Seven Lectures. Translated by Rev. T. J. DESPRÉS. Crown 8vo, 4s. 6d.

'Ministers who wish for suggestions and guidance as to the manner in which they can treat of the pressingly important subject which is considered by M. Naville, should take pains to acquaint themselves with this volume.'—*Christian World.*

Caspari (C. E.)—A Chronological and Geographical Introduction to THE LIFE OF CHRIST. 8vo, 7s. 6d.

'No Bible student should fail to make this treatise his constant friend and companion.'—*Bell's Weekly Messenger.*

Bruce (A. B., D.D.)—The Kingdom of God; or, Christ's Teaching according to the Synoptical Gospels. Third Edition, post 8vo, 7s. 6d.

Bruce (A. B., D.D.)—The Training of the Twelve; or, Exposition of Passages in the Gospels exhibiting the Twelve Disciples of Jesus under Discipline for the Apostleship. Fourth Edition, 8vo, 10s. 6d.

'A really great book on an important, large, and attractive subject; a book full of loving, wholesome, profound thoughts about the fundamentals of Christian faith and practice.'—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

Bruce (A. B., D.D.)—The Humiliation of Christ, in its Physical, ETHICAL, AND OFFICIAL ASPECTS. Third Edition, 8vo, 10s. 6d.

'This noble theological treatise.'—*Evangelical Magazine.*

Scrymgeour (Wm.)—Lessons on the Life of Christ. Bible Class Handbooks, 2s. 6d.

'A thoroughly satisfactory help both to teacher and scholar.'—*British Messenger.*

Lehmann (Pastor E.)—Scenes from the Life of Jesus. Crown 8vo, 3s. 6d.

'There is in these lectures a tender sympathy, and a spiritual devoutness and simplicity, which gives to them a real charm.'—*Literary World.*

Smeaton (Professor)—The Doctrine of the Atonement as Taught by CHRIST HIMSELF. Second Edition, 8vo, 10s. 6d.

'We attach very great value to this seasonable and scholarly production.'—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

Stier (Dr. Rudolph)—On the Words of the Lord Jesus. Eight vols. 8vo (or the 8 vols. bound in FOUR), £2, 2s. *nett.* Separate volumes may be had, price 10s. 6d.

'The whole work is a treasury of thoughtful exposition.'—*Guardian.*

Ullmann (Dr. Carl)—The Sinlessness of Jesus: An Evidence for Christianity. Third Edition, crown 8vo, 6s.

'Ullmann has studied the sinlessness of Christ more profoundly, and written on it more beautifully, than any other theologian.'—Canon FARRAR in his *Life of Christ.*

Ebrard (Dr. J. H. A.)—The Gospel History: A Compendium of Critical Investigations in support of the Four Gospels. 8vo, 10s. 6d.

'Nothing could have been more opportune than the republication in English of this admirable work.'—*British and Foreign Evangelical Review.*

Steinmeyer (Dr. F. L.)—The Miracles of Our Lord: Examined in their relation to Modern Criticism. 8vo, 7s. 6d.

'Will take its place among the best recent volumes of Christian evidence.'—*Standard.*

Steinmeyer (Dr. F. L.)—The History of the Passion and Resurrection OF OUR LORD, considered in the Light of Modern Criticism. 8vo, 10s. 6d.

'Will well repay earnest study.'—*Weekly Review.*

Krummacher (Dr. F. W.)—The Suffering Saviour; or, Meditations on the Last Days of the Sufferings of Christ. 8th Ed., cr. 8vo, 7s. 6d.

'To the devout and earnest Christian the volume will be a treasure indeed.'—*Wesleyan Times.*

Dorner (Professor)—History of the Development of the Doctrine of THE PERSON OF CHRIST. Five vols. 8vo, £2, 12s. 6d.

'So great a mass of learning and thought so ably set forth has never before been presented to English readers, at least on this subject.'—*Journal of Sacred Literature.*

Weiss (Dr. Bernhard)—The Life of Christ. 3 *vols.* 8*vo*, 31*s.* 6*d.*

'From the thoroughness of the discussion and clearness of the writer, we anticipate a very valuable addition to the Great Biography.'—*Freeman.*

The Voice from the Cross: A Series of Sermons on our Lord's Passion by eminent Living Preachers of Germany. Edited and translated by WM. MACINTOSH, M.A., F.S.S. Crown 8vo, 5s.

'Is certain to be welcomed with devout gratitude by every evangelical Christian in Britain.'—*Christian Leader.*

Salmond (Professor)—The Life of Christ. Bible Class Primers. Paper covers, 6d.; cloth, 8d.

'A scholarly and beautiful presentation of the story of the Four Gospels.'—*Sunday School Chronicle.*

Hall (Rev. Newman, LL.B.)—The Lord's Prayer: A Practical Meditation. Second Edition, crown 8vo, 6s.

'The author's thoughts are sharply cut, and are like crystals in their clearness and power.'—*British Quarterly Review.*

Just published, in crown 8vo, price 3s. 6d.,

THE CHURCH
IN THE MIRROR OF HISTORY:

Studies on the Progress of Christianity.

BY

KARL SELL, D.D., PH.D.,

DARMSTADT,

EDITOR OF 'LIFE AND LETTERS OF H.R.H. PRINCESS ALICE OF ENGLAND AND HESSE-DARMSTADT.'

TRANSLATED BY

ELIZABETH STIRLING

AND DEDICATED BY PERMISSION

TO HER ROYAL HIGHNESS PRINCESS CHRISTIAN OF SCHLESWIG-HOLSTEIN.

CONTENTS:—I. Primitive Christianity.—II. The Early Catholic Church.—III. The Middle Ages.—IV. The Reformation.—V. The Counter-Reformation.—VI. Christianity during the Last Century.

'Eminently thoughtful and instructive, and well worthy of being translated into English.'—*Glasgow Herald.*

'Those who cannot study the elaborate works of Giesceler, Neander, and Milman may learn from this small volume in a few hours the outlines of ecclesiastical history.'—*Manchester Examiner.*

EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET.

DATE DUE

NOV 23 1985
OCT 11 1986
APR 25 '69
DEC 13 1987
FEB 14 1986
APR 7 1986
4-21-86
MAY 29 1986
SEP 22 1986
MAY 13 1991

GAYLORD PRI

265.3
L729

Lilley, James Philip.
AUTHOR

The Lord's Supper.
TITLE

265.3
L729 Lilley, James Philip.
The Lord's Supper.

46022